

SEVEN DAYS

FREE

PARENTAL
ADVISORY
EXPLICIT CONTENT

The SEX issue



SEXPERT ADVICE

PAGE 38

Cabot counselors' erotic ed



THE MUNCH BUNCH

PAGE 42

Charlie Eichacker gets knotty



APHRODISIAC EATS

PAGE 46

Dinner and desire in Montréal

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WINTER 2014

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SATURDAY, MARCH 29,
AT 7:30 PM

Fun and stage veteran Molly Ringwald has recently released "Except Sometimes," an album of standards from the Great American Songbook. In Skowhegan, she will share her tunes and sing with her jazz quartet.

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Beer *Sat. March 15th 6:30-8pm*

Yucatec Cuisine in partnership with
Slow Food Vermont *Sun. March 16th 5-7pm*

Enjoying Wild Mushrooms all Year Long
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PHOTOGRAPH BY JAR

THE LAST SEVEN DAYS

COMPILED BY JEFF GIBBS & FREDERICK AGOST

WEEK IN REVIEW

FEBRUARY 10-20, 2014

Take and Give

On Friday, in the men's locker room of Burlington's Putnam Family YMCA, Seven Days staff writer Edmond Selke received a gift on an adjacent locker's metal venturine.

Dear Wallet Thief, Thank for teaching me the lesson that I shouldn't leave my belongings inside the locker room without locking it, even if I live in so called safest town. Now, I realize how important my wallet was, after its gone missing from Burlington YMCA men's locker room on Feb. 17th between 8:00 to 7:30pm. I understand, you might had some need for it and I hope my Green Card, Driver's License, credit cards, and business cards will help you through your need. Also, there were some free coupons, which you might have used to get some food for yourself. If you need further support, you can even contact me and I will help you, my business card is in there! Good luck and May god forgive you!

"Mistakes are always forgivable, if one has the courage to admit them."

~ Bruce Lee

The little newspaper's photo of the sign and posted it Saturday to Live Culture. The Seven Days on Friday, March 14, shows the story had more than 1,400 hits on Facebook and a mostly happy end: Jackson Khushka, 24, the 19-year-old, is happy with the note, reported that his wallet was returned to him Monday. Apparently the thief after exchanging currency and credit cards, had dropped Khushka's wallet in a public mailbox where a postal worker's found it and returned it to him.

The note's tone of forgiveness was an eye opener. Khushka continues split camera through not only in his chosen profession as a "living art" designer with the Christian Center Youth in his urban program, but also in his specialty for the underwear store.

"Whatever decisions we make — poor or rich or whatever — they have to do with the belief that we're living in," he says. "The person who made that choice [to steal the wallet], maybe it was a good choice for them. I believe that this person is not really bad. He is just influenced by his class."

Khushka came to Vermont after 11 years of living as a refugee camp in Nepal. His aspiration for citizenship is currently in process, so he was happy to hear his green card took. Though his positive attitude toward Vermont has not been rewarded by this incident, Khushka does admit that it's probably time to purchase a padlock.



facing facts



MEET THE POISSON

Gov. Peter Shumlin rose to the occasion with the red and black robe on Democratic Governor Asa Hutchinson's business in D.C. As a result, a court case was filed.



IN CASE CANADA INVADERS

The Vermont State Police gave a "warning" to the "invaders" who had been "invading" the state of Vermont. The Department of Homeland Security "Wanted" list.



THE BUS DRIPS BLEED

No more with the local CTA's bus drivers. While — but no more — the bus drivers have been "dripping" blood on the job. The bus is a "bleeding" machine.



OPEN WIRE

The Vermont State Police gave a "warning" to the "invaders" who had been "invading" the state of Vermont. The Department of Homeland Security "Wanted" list.



1 minute, 48 seconds

There's been long wait for the most Vermont on average, according to a new tracking app called Speedometer — we're the third fastest to drive to the state. (The app says you can go to the state in 1 minute, 48 seconds.)

That about a second in the state.

TOP FIVE

MOST POPULAR ITEMS ON THE VERMONT NEWS

1. Live Culture: "In Vermont, Even Righteous Anger is Properly" by Edmond Selke. A 19-year-old, is happy with the note, reported that his wallet was returned to him Monday. Apparently the thief after exchanging currency and credit cards, had dropped Khushka's wallet in a public mailbox where a postal worker's found it and returned it to him.
2. "New Orleans: A History of Combining Forces to Fight Drug Abuse" by Mark Selke. A 19-year-old, is happy with the note, reported that his wallet was returned to him Monday. Apparently the thief after exchanging currency and credit cards, had dropped Khushka's wallet in a public mailbox where a postal worker's found it and returned it to him.
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tweet of the week:

By @VermontGov
Gov. Peter Shumlin gave a "warning" to the "invaders" who had been "invading" the state of Vermont. The Department of Homeland Security "Wanted" list.

Gov. Peter Shumlin gave a "warning" to the "invaders" who had been "invading" the state of Vermont. The Department of Homeland Security "Wanted" list.

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- Ballot Question #2 includes \$500,000 in Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to the CSC Permanent Home project, providing site development for a portion of the Moran yard to build a modern facility for the CSC's award winning programming.
- TIF investments in our waterfront - including CSC, ECHO, and Waterfront Park - as well as New Moran and certainty on its future, accomplish community economic development objectives without raising municipal tax rates or putting city funds at risk.
- CSC will leverage an additional \$4.5 million dollars of private philanthropic investment in a new public building and storage yard.

Our Permanent Home.

- CSC founder and renowned architect, Marcel Beaudin, designed a state of the art facility to accommodate the CSC's impressive growth over the past 20 years and capacity for its future. The Development Review Board (DRB) approved the Beaudin design in 2011 and CSC is eager to break ground.
- The new 10,000 sq. ft. building includes classroom space, offices, boat storage and maintenance facilities, and will enable the CSC to enhance its award winning programming.



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- CSC is a community based non-profit organization that provides access, education, and recreation for the community on Burlington's waterfront.
- CSC serves nearly 6,000 youth, adults, and families annually.
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- 90% of Signature Program participants and 40% of all users receive scholarships from the CSC.



community sailing center
lake champlain burlington vermont

the
MAGNIFICENT

MUST SEE, MUST DO THIS WEEK
EDITED BY COURTNEY COBB

7

③

THURSDAY 27

On the Edge

When Jeremy Mathews lost the use of his legs as a motorcycle accident, the extreme windsurfing enthusiast defined his body's position for the outdoors. He learned windsurfing and then adaptive equipment. This determination drove the San Diego native to tackle his new disability as he trains in the documentary *Once in a Steady Cruise*.

SEE CALCULATIONS ON PAGE 12

④

SLIDE 02

Pivotal Moments

Positive or negative? Big events don't affect life events. Never change us. Brian's Jackson, Matt Hoge, James Burroughs, Ashley Smith, Ron Jacobs and David Stone recount their experiences at **What Happens You?** Part of a fundraising campaign for the Center for Economic Research and Social Drivings. These stories emphasize the importance of making each voice be heard.

SEE CALIFORNIA LISTING ON PAGE 10

⑤

SLINDER 02

Plano Man

Fast Forward has made a name for himself as a pianist with far-reaching musical interests and a repertoire to match. Inspired by the New York Times for his "rare genius," the UVM affiliate artist has performed an emotional range and with top-contemporary composers. In a program of Romantic masterpieces, Degel's elegant talents for the piano will be heard in a program of Romantic masterpieces. Degel's elegant talents for the piano will be heard in a program of Romantic masterpieces. Degel's elegant talents for the piano will be heard in a program of Romantic masterpieces.

SEE CASH FLOW LISTING ON PAGE 14

⑥

FEBRUARY 2015

Melody Maker

Having from Brooklyn by way of South Dakota and Vermont, **Rachel Riley** mingles folk-musical only sounds with country sensibilities. The resulting mishup of folk and old country comes to life via the singer-songwriter's poignant lyrics and classical wood-bowing. Fresh off a three-year hiatus, the rising talent celebrates the release of *Ghost of a Cowboy* at Sam's Kitchen.

THIS STORY ONE PAGE

⑦

SATURDAY 01

Versatile Vegetation

While snow and ice prohibit the growth of most plant species, evergreens thrive in the rugged, northern climates including Vermont. Cincinatti has led the New England Native Plant Society's **Medicinal Plants of the Winter Landscape**, an educational program dedicated to these hardy trees. Participants learn responsible wild-crafting practices, their worth up and down the supply chain.

DOI: 10.1002/eqe.2457

①

ONGOING NEXT OF KIN

A panel in TR Erosson's exhibit "Crackle & Drag: Film Index" explores that the show is a "haunting portrait of the artist's mother" who committed suicide in 2003. Personal artifacts such as vintage photographs, sculptures, film and wall-mounted objects — including a replica of his grandfather's old car (pictured) — serve as a multimedia ode to the past and its influence on the present.

THE REVIEW ON PAGE 102

②

SUBJECT:

Choo Choo Fest

All aboard! Locomotive enthusiasts of all ages head to the **Vermont Railrods Model Railroad Show**, where modelers trade toys, complement each other's new additions and vendors. A wide variety of equipment and supplies delights hobbyists, while kiddos get in on the fun with a kid's railroad class and hands-on activities.

SEE CALENDAR LISTING OPPOSITE 64

Continued on next page

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Teachers' Pet

Nearly two months into the legislative session, the scene at the Statehouse remains unusually slow.

It's the calm before the storm. Next spring, if Gov. **PETER SHUMLIN** gets his way, the legislature will vote on a historic, expensive and politically perilous bill to finance the governor's long-sought goal of providing universal health insurance.

But to get there from here, he'll need a legislature that has his back. That's why the state's biggest union — the Vermont-National Education Association — pledged last week to investigate a dissent political advocacy group called Vermont Leads.

"Vermonters already support the creation of Green Mountain Care," says Vermont NEA spokesman **GARREN ALLEN**. "Our goal is to let lawmakers and the governor know their support for what they're doing."

They might need to hear it. After last fall's rocky rollout of Vermont Health Connect — a byproduct of the federal Affordable Care Act, or Obamacare — some lawmakers may be hesitant to follow through on yet another major health care overhaul.

"I'm concerned that there's not as much support for this as you might hope, but it's still early in the discussion," says **STEVEN STANBACH**, a veteran health care activist who recently assumed his duties as executive director of Vermont Leads. "My biggest worry is that the entire discussion becomes about a ten bill, as opposed to, 'What does this tell us for Vermonters?'"

Along with leaving the field, Vermont Democrats could also lose some seats this November. The long-marched Vermont Republican Party appears intent on recruiting better legislative candidates than usual, rather than usual State GOP political director **DAVID BLUMS** says the party's already signed up six challengers to run for the Senate — including former party chairwoman **RAY MCDONALD** in Washington County and 2012 runner-up **DAVID BISHOP** in Franklin County — and 12 for the House.

"For the financing plan to be passed in the next legislature, [Democrats] have to build their ground or increase their expertise — and that is severely under threat," says Vermonters for Health Care Freedom founder **CAROL JACOBSON**, a staunch opponent of single-payer. "That's why you're seeing these big, out-of-state unions step up to protect this agenda."

In fact, those unions haven't potted up all that much — at least, not yet. At Vermont Public Radio's **WEEK MCDONALD** first reported last week, the Vermont NEA parent organization had raised \$184,000 to fund Vermont Leads for the next six

months. It also paid \$18,000 for a poll to gauge popular support for single payer. But that might just be the tip of the iceberg.

"We fully expect other groups will lend their support to this effort," Allen says, adding that his organization has had "conversations" with other unions about funding the effort.

One hint could be the recent addition of **GABRIELLA LAFRANCE** to Vermont Leads' board. Laffrance served as Vermont coordinator for AFSCME Council 55, which won an election last summer to represent more than 7,000 home care workers. In September he was elected president of the Vermont AFL-CIO.

VERMONT-NEA'S PARENT ORGANIZATION DROPPED \$80,000 TO FUND VERMONT LEADS FOR THE NEXT SIX MONTHS.

Laffrance says it's "too early to comment" on whether AFSCME or the AFL-CIO will invest in Vermont Leads this election cycle. But he says, "I can tell you there's lots of support."

Ironically, it was AFSCME's unsuccessful appearance in the race to represent home care workers, the Service Employees International Union, that actually founded Vermont Leads.

As it gelled up in the summer of 2012 to fight for legislation allowing those workers to organize in Vermont, the out-of-state SEIU created the group to carry lever with local lawmakers. It spent more than \$300,000 on pro-single-payer advertising that summer and another \$50,000 that fall supporting candidates through an affiliated political action committee. After the SEIU lost its organizing bid, the union left the state and Vermont Leads went dark.

Sterling says he expects Vermont Leads to relaunch its PAC, which could operate as an independent, expenditure-only "super-PAC," as it did last year, allowing it to raise unlimited sums from a single source.

That could turn out to be a very big deal if Democrats and Progressives face more than token opposition this fall. Or if deep-pocketed single-payer opponents — such as Burlington mega-donor **LAUREN BLOOMBERG** or out-of-state business groups — try to stop Vermont from becoming a national organizing hub.

If the unions save the day, you can

bet they won't let their friends in the Statehouse forget it.

\$14 Million Question

When Shumlin delivered his budget address last month, the governor promised for the unprecedented move that he would not raise broad-based taxes this year.

Of course, as reporters — and defenders of the English language — are fond of noting, "broad-based" doesn't actually mean "broad-based" in governor-speak. While the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the term as "wide-ranging; general," Vermont governor past and present have limited the definition of "broad-based taxes" to those targeting income taxes, rooms and meals.

And so it was that Shumlin felt he kept his promise last year despite supporting a gas-tax increase most Vermont drivers surely felt was pretty broad-based. And so it is this year, now that Shumlin is striping — for the second year in a row — to plug a hole in the state's health care budget with a \$14 million tax increase on health-insurance costs.

As Shumlin noted in his budget — but not in his budget address — his administration hopes to double the 0.6 percent tax the state bills health insurance companies for every claim filed. But as critics point out, insurance companies can quick to pass that tax along to the "broad-based" public, who end up paying higher premiums.

"The logic of it doesn't work for us," says Rep. **JOHN WHELAN** (D-Colony), who chairs the two-writing House Ways and Means Committee. "If we're trying to keep health care costs down — and particularly premium costs — why would we want to do something that would increase premiums?"

When Shumlin pitched a similar plan last year, Senate's committee rejected it. This year, the says, "Though we haven't taken a vote, I would up the general feeling really hasn't changed."

WOMEN SAY Shumlin's director of health care reform, says it's true that "On its own, [a claim assessment increase] would create new pressures on premiums because it does get passed on to consumers." But the administration is also pushing to increase Medicaid reimbursement rates to providers by 2 percent, which she argues will reduce a cost shift to consumers that could end up being partly broad-based. Changes in tandem, she argues, the two changes would net have Vermonters. Another compromise in the Senate, Finance Chairman **JOHN ASKE** (D-Franklin), has yet another idea.

Aske released a memo this week with the

title "Fair and Reasonable? or Whom?" in which he argues that a broad base of taxpayers is unfairly subsidizing large employers that don't offer health insurance to their employees.

When the legislature created Citizens Health in 2005, he wrote, it required that employers pay a "fair and reasonable" amount for every employee to whom a didn't offer health insurance. That rate now stands at \$106 a year — less than a quarter of the \$1,164 it costs the state to insure each Medicaid recipient. The balance, Ashe argues, is borne by taxpayers.

According to Ashe, acquired from the tax and labor departments, the 10 restaurants and grocery stores that operate at least one store in Vermont with 100 or more employees pay a collective \$904,000 through the employer insurance. Taxpayers foot the remaining \$4.1 million billions to insure those 10 companies' employees.

If the administration is looking for another \$4 million to pay for health care programs, he says, he's more inclined to ask the state's largest employers.

"I don't think it's fair," he says of Shundt's proposed change assessment bill. "I believe that the growth in subsidized health care should not once again be paid for by all businesses and all taxpayers, but that maybe it's time to look to the non-insuring employers to pay a more fair share of the cost."

Ready, Aim ... Vote

Could the results of Burlington's vote next week on a trio of charter changes influence the statewide debate over Vermont's gun laws?

Two groups fighting on either side of the issue now seem to think so. Both Gun Sense Vermont and the Vermont Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs have stepped in the Queen City dust swirling money and votes to make their respective cases.

At issue are three separate resolutions that would ban guns from bars, require them to be stored under lock and key and allow law enforcement officials to confiscate them from those suspected of domestic abuse.

Gun-right supporters say the charter changes, which would have to be approved by the legislature and signed by the governor, would shoot a hole right through a 1980 state law barring municipalities from restricting gun rights.

"This is such an incredibly slippery slope," says VNSC acting president **OWEN BRIDGES**, who worries that other towns and cities could follow Burlington's lead, thereby creating a "patchwork" of laws. "There is a presumption clause, and there's a reason for it."

Gun-control activist **ANDY BRADEN**, who cofounded Gun Sense Vermont, argues that next Tuesday's vote "has statewide implications" for a "different reason."

"We want to make it clear to the Statehouse that when voters are given the

choice to vote, they support that," she says.

While Braden's group had hoped to make a serious push for gun law this session, it now plans to hold off until next year, when Braden thinks recently elected legislators will be less nervous about tackling such a hot-button issue. At that point, the group hopes to focus its energies on strengthening the state's background checks.

For now, between 25 and 30 Gun Sense members are focusing on canvassing and phone-banking in support of Burlington's ballot measures each weekend, according to organizer **WENDY ADAMS**. The group has raised \$1,636 and spent \$1,632 on its Burlington advocacy — much of it on advertising, including in Seven Days — according to a recent filing with the secretary of state's office.

That's far less than the \$20,000 VNSC has raised and the \$15,563 it's spent. The pro-gun group has dropped \$1,232 on lawn signs and more than \$12,000 on radio ads, according to its filing.

Nearly one of the Sportsmen Federation's biggest individual donors is an infamous sportsman's conservative donor **LEONOR BRIDGEMAN**, who contributed \$1,000 to the cause.

The Burlington Free Press has slammed the club, opining against the domestic violence-related charter change as a recent editorial.

"The change on the Town Meeting Day ballot is overly broad and allows confusion without requiring formal charges or proof that the weapons present an imminent threat to persons," editorial page editor **ANDREW VROCK**.

Burlington Mayor **MORG WUNDERGARD** says it is difficult, cutting the proposals "important steps to take for public safety in Burlington."

But the mayor declared against the rights of his political action committee called Partnership for Burlington's Future, before the measures, saying the PAC "was created to advocate and organize on local issues and waterfront investment issues" so far it's spent \$5,037 on Burlington's non-gun-related ballot initiatives.

Nevertheless, Wundergard says he's been speaking out in support of the gun proposals in newspaper columns and neighborhood meetings, and he says his volunteers will help Gun Sense distribute their then this weekend.

Because the charter changes would require Statehouse approval, Wundergard argues that passage would require an unusual conversation in Montpelier that could net the table for Gun Sense's proposed universal background check advocacy.

"I think that discussion is coming," he says. "I think Burlington has a strong voice on these will impact that policy." □

Ducharme, Tim Ashe is the domestic partner of Seven Days publisher and coeditor **Pamela Brady**.



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Capital Fireworks: Incumbent, Ousted Employee Spar in Montpelier Mayor's Race

BY PAUL HEINTZ

The nation's smallest state capital is gearing up for its biggest and most contentious election in recent memory.

Up and down the ballot, contrasted races abound — from park commissioner to city councilor. Generating the most light and heat is the race for mayor, which features the city's recently fired planning director and the man who blames for her dismissal.

"The energy around these races is tremendous. It's unprecedented," says City Clerk John O'Brien. "It's a bit concerning in some ways, in that there have been three-ups and a degree of division that Montpelier voters are simply not used to in municipal elections."

Candidates and voters alike claim they want to talk about something else: the city's proposed 10.2 percent spike in school taxes, say, or its chronically potholed roads. But the conversation inevitably returns to the firing of Gwenolene Hollander and the race, if any, that Mayor John Holler played in it.

"The whole thing is kind of toxic," says city council candidate Peter Gaurin. "We're not talking about issues. We're talking about, 'What do you think about the situation?' And I think don't unfavorite."

In one corner stands Holler, a silver-haired lobbyist for Downs Richlin Martin whose sharp suits and Oklahoma drawl make him a distinctive figure in the Statehouse and around town. Two years ago, the longtime school board chairman and father of three won an uncontested election to become Montpelier's part-time mayor.

In making his case for reelection, Holler points to the city's recent progress advancing stalled infrastructure projects, including a transit center, a bike path extension and a distinct heating system that will connect a state biomass plant to downtown businesses. While keeping municipal taxes in check, he said the city council have also been reenergizing in Montpelier's crumbling roads, Holler argues.

"What's this race about? It's about running a city, improving the quality of life for people who live here," Holler says. "Ideology hasn't really played a role in the work the council has done."

Hollander, his challenger, doesn't see it that way.

In her view, a conservative cabal of wealthy property owners has taken over the city council and planning commission and imposed an "anti-city agenda" on Montpelier. While that group calls itself Vibrant and Affordable Montpelier, Hollander derisively refers to it as the "Glu Party" or a high-end Tea Party.



its members, she says, have ignored the dictates of the city's 100-year master plan and are "reversing Montpelier's zoning ordinance to suit private interests."

"I think they're working together behind the scenes to undermine what the people and they wanted for the city," Hollander says. "Right now, the planning commission and the city council are creating [the master plan] like it's yesterday's news. That's not how it's done."

Hollander has more than a passing interest in the matter. A published author and expert on community planning, her work with a network of nonprofits and advocacy groups has led to speaking engagements and planning gigs everywhere from Alberta to Johannesburg.

For seven years, the Colorado native and member of one juggled that work with a full-time gig as Montpelier's director of planning and community development. In the latter role, she says, she led the city's 100-year planning project and obtained federal and state funding for every of the projects Holler is now promoting.

But in that time, Hollander made more than a few enemies at city hall. Last November, after two months of tugging with City Manager Bill Fraser to private meetings, internal memos and on the pages of the *Berno-Montpelier Times Argus*, she was fired.



To say that the motivation for Hallenheit's sacking remains in dispute is to vastly understate the matter. Both sides make their cases with passion, ethical and rational supporting documentation.

While mostly speculative, Hallenheit's version of events is by far the most intriguing. The way she tells it, Haller's work

which he said, "blatant [her] credibility as a city official." As a result, he received a portion of her portfolio, put her under the supervision of his deputy, and directed her to "refrain from involvement in external political issues such as public housing, which may impact [her] effectiveness as a Montpelier City official."

Though Fraser quickly extended the political gap, erick, Hallenheit maintains the message was clear.

"I can only look at the situation and think, 'They're trying to destroy my professional reputation for speaking out on subjects that aren't in alignment with certain officials' views,'" she told Seven Days in November.

Haller now says he acted in seeking the results, which he admits "clearly created the appearance of a conflict," and he has since recused himself from all public housing-related issues. But he and Fraser adamantly deny that Hallenheit's subsequent ouster was instigated by the mayor or motivated by his clients' interests. Rather, they say it was the result of Hallenheit's chronic inability to cooperate with elected officials and her own biases.

"She's had a series of conflicts with the planning commission, the city council, our different members of the public," Fraser says. "This has been an ongoing issue predating the current mayor, predating the current version of the city council."

According to Fraser, Hallenheit's accusations hinge upon a selective and misleading reading of the record. The way he sees it, the long-festering situation came to a head in September, when the entire planning commission (he stressed to quote an mayor because its members were so tired of fighting with Hallenheit) their opposition to their zoning plans and her charges of ethical impropriety at one point led the commission's chairman to refer to her as a "thief."

"She keeps recasting this as being about John Haller and big banking, but it's not about that," says Councilor Thierry Gaudin, an ally of the mayor's. "The dispute is between a Green in Hallenheit and her boss, who is Bill Fraser."

Haller's September email, which Hallenheit often invokes in evidence of municipal meddling, actually came in response to a message Fraser had sent two hours earlier informing the mayor that he was "following up with Gwen today in writing" to "tell her to back off" on

TOWN MEETING

When Haller failed to match her, the claims, the mayor overstepped his authority and goaded Fraser into disciplining and then firing her.

To support her case, Hallenheit points to two emails Haller wrote Fraser complaining about her controversial activities.

In the first, sent last March, the mayor

forwarded the city manager an email from a fellow lobbyist at Dennis Ruchlin Martin summarizing a public housing advocates' testimony to the legislature. Noting that "this is the issue that Gwen is deeply affiliated with," Haller wrote, "I still don't see how our city's chief economic development officer can hold and promote views that are fundamentally anti-capitalist in nature."

In the second, sent in September, Haller forwarded Fraser an email between staff and board members of the Vermont

Housing Finance Agency about a Town Meeting Day campaign one of Hallenheit's groups was organizing to support public housing. Among the recipients of the email was Haller's wife, Jennifer, who serves as a VHA board member in her role as the state's deputy commissioner of housing and community development.

In his note to Fraser, Haller asked "have Gwen encourage us to run her non-profit and pursue this initiative while maintaining her obligation to the city" and "how this campaign is consistent with the City's economic development policies and her job description."

"Given obviously our passive orientation on her own time, but as the city's chief economic development officer, her position on these issues" can't be distinguished from her official position with the city," Haller wrote. "Between this and the planning commission issues this really can't continue."

A week later, Fraser informed Hallenheit by memo that she'd lost the trust of city officials. Fraser wrote that Hallenheit continued to "take public positions on political matters that may not reflect city policy."

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In Burlington's New North End, a Longtime Resident Takes On a Titan

BY ALICIA FRIESE

In the living room of a three-Road home in Burlington's Ward 4, a city council candidate is calling for more business growth and control of school spending.

It is Kurt Wright, the self-described "veteran" Republican state representative seeking to replace the seat he held for 10 years before making a third unsuccessful run for mayor in 2010.

Wright, 56, is a first-time council contender who calls himself a "conservative Democrat."

The two annual town slate races in Burlington's New North End, politically defined as Wards 4 and 5, which is the Queen City's closest approximation to a conservative enclave. But the area's politics have changed. When

"institutional knowledge," Ode says she would bring "fresh ideas and new energy" to the council. At the same time, she says her moves "sneak closely" with those of her opponent.

For instance: Both candidates point to the need for Burlington to grow its grand old but troubled properties by encouraging development and being business-friendly. In their support, the waterfront development projects facing an up-or-down vote on Town Meeting Day: they

"That shows commitment," notes Jane Knodell, a Progressive City Councilor from Ward 2 and longtime political ally of Wright's.

Last fall, during the council's protracted discussion of restructuring, Wright summoned Knodell and the four New North End councilors to his house one Saturday, where he says he worked with them to hash out a compromise plan.

Dave Hartnett (D-Ward 4) was there, and he too is seeking Wright. The two have known one another for 20 years, and Hartnett has served as Wright's campaign manager. But Hartnett says he is endorsing Wright — so the displacement of other Democrats, he adds — simply "based on the fact that he's done an incredible job representing Ward 4."

**THEY ARE BOTH
INCREDIBLE CAMPAIGNERS,
SO IT'S GOING TO BE A REALLY TIGHT RACE**

JEAN Q. SULLIVAN



Candidate

TOWN MEETING

recently it's been just one. The council's sole Republican, Ward 7 City Councilor Paul Derouin, is not seeking reelection.

Wright, 56, is making his minority status a centerpiece of his campaign, saying he'll oversee "balance" on a council dominated by Democrats and Progressives. "There's a real chance that if I'm not elected there will be no Republican voice whatever," he points out.

Democrats say the New North End is outgrowing its conservative image and the area would benefit from representatives who reflect the new political reality.

"Wright fits Ward 4 like a comfortable old suit," says Ward 7 Councilor Steve Ayres, a Democrat who after an unsuccessful run in 2010, elected a city council seat in 2014. "Not to detract from Kurt's service to this part of the city and to the city as a whole, but it's time for some fresh air, perspective and fresh new eyes."

Understanding? "Oh, definitely!"

Ode, 58, and her husband, Paul, raised their four children in Ward 6. Though the newer run for parties elected office during that time, Ode did get involved in the politics of education. For 10 years, Ode served on the city's school board. She's also spent six years on the state board of education.

Since her last stint on the school board ended 12 years ago, Ode has led a variety of volunteer and paid gigs — from teaching music workshops to helping high school students write their college essays to coordinating lobbyists for Deans, Rachel's Martin, where her husband serves as CEO.

Ode says people have prodded her for years to run for political office, starting with former governor Howard Dean. When he was state legislator, Dean was impressed by a presentation Ode gave at a Neighborhood Planning Assembly meeting, she recalls. He suggested she run for city council.

Ode doesn't deny she picked a tough year to finally make a bid.

"Oh, definitely!" she responds when asked if she considers herself the underdog, but she also contends that her school board experience makes her uniquely suited to serve on the council, at a time when Mayor Miro Weinberger is pushing for more collaboration between the two entities.

While Wright is touting his "experience" and

also agree that the city's underfunded pension system needs attention.

Asked about how she differs from Wright, Ode pauses for a full half minute before saying, "I'm not so much a political hawk."

She does come across as more policy wonk than paid-slate politician. In interviews and a candidate debate, Ode frequently turns to a notebook to retrieve figures about the school budget or city finances. And she shies away from saying anything overly critical about Wright.

Her backers are less reserved.

"The benefit he brings to the table is more polished than actual work," says Jo on Crillman, a state representative from the New North End who served on the city council with Wright. Sullivan says that unlike Wright, who serves four months in the legislature each year as Ode wouldn't have to juggle two jobs, she adds, "Having been both places, the hardest job I've ever done in politics is my current one."

Wright Stuff

If Wright wins his city council bid, he'll represent his constituents in Burlington City Hall — and in Montpelier. He's served both roles at the same time in the past, arguing that it's "an additional benefit to have at least one member of the city council serve on the legislature."

He'd been on the Burlington City Council for a decade when he left to run for mayor in 2011. But even after losing to Miro Weinberger — his third failed mayoral bid — he remained an almost ubiquitous presence at Burlington rallies, attending city council meetings and neighborhood forums and continuing to participate in behind-the-scenes policymaking.

Hartnett says Ode has "really been absent from the local scene" and he questions her credentials as a fiscal conservative, pointing out that she, unlike Wright, is voting in favor of a proposed school budget that could raise taxes by about 10 percent.

"Fiscally conservative would not be somebody who is supporting that budget," Hartnett says, adding that Ode's position puts her at odds with the majority of Ward 4 residents, who have voted against school spending increases in the past. Ode counters that voting "no" on the budget won't do much to buffer Burlington taxpayers, because state-wide factors are driving a significant portion of the property tax increase. "This amounts to the cost of education to rise faster than either the cost of living or the rate of inflation," Ode said. But she thinks cost-cutting efforts should start at the state level.

Both Ode and Wright promise to address rising property tax rates — a particularly contentious issue in the New North End, where many own their homes and directly feel the



Kurt Wright

PHOTO BY JANE KNODELL

BURLINGTON'S BIG QUESTIONS

Burlington voters will weigh in on gun laws and education Tuesday on Town Meeting Day. They will also vote "yes" or "no" on plans to develop the waterfront and to change the city's police wards. Here's a primer.

- 1. Paying for school.** The biggest local item is a permanent, one-time public school funding rate and choice whether to approve a five-year interim budget for fiscal year 2019. There's a spending increase of roughly 4 percent, which would push the property tax rate up 9.6 percent.
- 2. Developing the waterfront.** A "yes" vote would authorize the city to take on \$5.5 million in debt to develop key areas of the waterfront. That money could supplement larger private investments in six different projects. The biggest is a new park to be developed along the Mallett River. The city's contribution rates will be increased, leaving at least one-half million dollars in property tax revenue to pay off the debt incurred at the start of the project. The projects come as a package deal. An alternative vote would also authorize the city to lay down the Mallett River should the private developers fail to raise the required capital.
- 3. Raising city taxes.** Voters will accept or reject a 3 percent increase in the general city tax rate. It's been 10 years since the last increase. City officials say the additional money would let them make infrastructure improvements to city buildings, such as more energy-efficient lighting, and create 10 new staff positions. Two of which are 11 jobs.
- 4. Buying a dam.** Voters will check "yes" or "no" on a plan to purchase Wisconsin One, the hydroelectric dam spanning the Wisconsin River from its private owner Price Inc. Six million. A "yes" vote would authorize the city to use funds to acquire 50 percent of that dam and make demands upon the Midwest Generating Station, which runs the dam. The Burlington Electric Department estimates the 14-megawatt dam could supply roughly 10 percent of the city's energy needs.
- 5. Redistricting.** To avoid running afoul of the U.S. Constitution, the city has to reconfigure its ward boundaries, adjusting for population changes. To give residents equal representation on the city council. In the current arrangement, seven wards each elect one councilor to the 14-member council. Under the proposed system, six wards would send one councilor each. The wards would also be placed to form four larger districts, each of which would elect one councilor for a total of 12 councilors. First voters have to agree to the new system; then the state legislators have to approve the change. The goal is to have it in place for the March 2020 election.
- 6. 7. 8. Locking up guns.** District form number six, if approved, would allow police to take as hostages if there's a reasonable suspicion of domestic violence. The seventh measure would prevent people from bringing guns into any place that holds a "lower alcohol" law enforcement and the owners of that establishments would be exempt. The eighth form would require that all venues or security places adhere to an "all of these resolutions, but are subject to the local board's approval."

impact of rising gun rates. But Hartnett says it's significant that Ole is supporting the budget, while Wright stands in opposition.

"I think it shows a very clear contrast between the move. It's clearly more in touch with his constituents in the New North End."

Even Ole's strongest leaders concede that most people — themselves included — like Wright as a person and appreciate his service to Ward 4 where the candidate and his wife, Kim Natoli, have lived for roughly 25 years. Again, and he's had to work to convince people that the outcome of the race isn't a foregone conclusion. It's worth a recent conversation in which the other person insisted, "But Kim is the king of the New North End."

Wright, however, is careful not to convey confidence. "I'm working as hard as I have on any campaign," he says, adding that he expects to have knocked on nearly every door in the ward before Town Meeting Day.

He's got an edge on fundraising, too. According to campaign finance reports filed Tuesday, Wright has raised \$5,000 to Ole's \$2,000.

Wright is trying to turn his last 100-vote standing into a selling point. Rival candidates it is well as he could. "I don't think it's important for the mayor to deal with a diversity of points of view, to have to put together a coalition to support his initiatives and not to have a guaranteed majority."

Will Burlington's New North End buy it? "They are such incredible campaigns so it's going to be a really tight race," predicted Greenleaf. Again, he's a similar assessment. "I do think it's going to be close and a lot closer than a lot of people are expecting."

Contact whow@sevendayvt.com

INFO

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Order Up! An Old-School Deli Counter Is at the Heart of Burlington's Changing South End

BY MARK DAVIS

At lunchtime, the line at the Pine Street Deli counter isn't a line at all. On a Thursday afternoon, a dozen people cluster in no discernible pattern, crying, moaning and waiting to be called forward. The group includes twentysomethings in hoodies, a man in leather talking on his cellphone, a worker in stained overalls and two middle-aged women in puffy coats.

On the other side of the counter, laboring between a sandwich grill and a shelf lined with cutting boards, are an people who are either members of the Alvano family or have worked with them long enough to be considered part of the clan.

"We can get you fast!" they yell, again and again.

In the past seven years, the Greek family has lured a cross-section of customers to their bustling sandwich shop and convenience store in Burlington's South End. On this day, the diversity of the neighborhood is on full display.

Mar Eutis (polly chaestinis) is on a break from installing flooring at a nearby hotel. Mike Spencer (myfied chicken salad) milks his ritual stop as he commutes between home and his consulting office downtown. Sharon Holcomb (boudgins with hotdog sauce) is landing home in her husband's after a shift in the Fletcher Allen medical center billing office. Dan Venn (terraball sub, boudgins with hotdog) grabs a hot meal for himself and his crew. They're drifting fast like the red puffs.

"It's been Coney," Venn says. Michael Alvano, 32, runs the grill, where prosciutto cheese bubbles on top of smoldering green peppers and shredded meat. A Burlington High School grad, Alvano grew up working at the old Parkway Diner, which his parents used to own. He went to college in Nevada, returned home and went back to work for his parents when they opened the deli.

Alongside him, since twentysomethings wear pile green peppers on top of yellow peppers on top of pickles and tomatoes and meat into sub-rolls that somehow keep their shape under the broiler. First Michael Alvano held the grill; now his younger roommate got married a job. Then another roommate got married. He finally, five of the pair went up working together at Pine Street.

On the opposite end of the counter, first-time mom from New York, Christine Alvano speeds through the lunch rush urging her customers to forward.

"Because of my white hair, people have a tendency to respect me more so when



Owner Alvano and a Pine Street Deli employee handle the lunch rush at Friday.

I yell, 'What can I get you?' they come forward," she says. "They're more apt to respect an older woman yelling at them than one of the young guys. I can push them along."

Her husband, George — "the big kahuna," his son calls him — fronts the checks on a ledger pad of customers' names, class with a customer's mother. He wants a marker to know that his family offered more than just the traditional deli sandwich fare.

"We do specials, meatball every day. Philly steaks are really big," he says in the quiet moment of his native Greece. "We do homemade soups, chicken pot pie, that kind of stuff."

"What you want to see anywhere on the menu are the words 'spicy,' 'dressing,' 'low-fat' or 'gluten-free.'"

"If you're going to want that stuff, I'm not sure that we're the best place," Michael Alvano says. "It's ultimately how we've been successful — just cooking food the way it's supposed to be. Home-style. We're tried, but Cobb salad doesn't sell well."

This is the same family that opened a second business last year, a diner in Colchester and called it "The Daily Place." The Alvano family ran the Parkway on William Road in South Burlington for years. But when the 70s landlord demanded a steep rent increase seven years ago, they

belied and looked for a new business. They found that Red Roberts, Pine Street's predecessor on the northeast corner of Flynn Avenue, was on the market. The family saw potential in the neighborhood.

"Red's" a South End mainstay since the 1940s, used to get lots of customers from the old General Dynamics plant that opened in 1946 and employed 3,500 people at its peak. Now, Barrow Snowboards and Deodorant employ dozens along the Pine Street corridor; florists, studios and eateries are opening at a steady clip, and the South End Art Fair brings 35,000 visitors to the neighborhood on the weekend after Labor Day.

For all the changes in the area, its appetite for old-school comfort food remains a constant.

In the time the Alvano family bought the store, the lunch counter business at Red Roberts had slumped, which put more pressure on convenience store sales. The Alvano family quickly turned that around. They de-emphasized the cigarettes and soda and meat and, aside from what they had enough staff to fill orders quickly, and now make 75 percent of their money from the deli counter.

During peak hours, they move steadily around each other. When a driver brings down to the floor, it gets belied in the direction of the traffic, there's no time to pick it up.

"Drop two more in one day you're fired," Michael Alvano says, sounding like a man who has never wanted to fire anyone.

Deli workers chat up regulars when they can. But at the lunch hour, most of the conversation is confined to the front-line chatter to name of order.

"No banana peppers or jalapenos?"
"White or wheat?"
"Here you are, honey."
"Any herbs or spices?"
"I'll do soup and sandwich."

Around 12:40 p.m., the phone rings, nearly inaudible over the din. Pine Street's most loyal customer is on the line, as he is every day at this time.

"This is Roy. I'm coming down."

Roy Shiley works as a parts manager at the nearby Burlington Hyundai dealership. The guys at Pine Street make his lunch — tuna sandwich, white sauce, one slice of tomato, on whole wheat bread — and leave it, wrapped, in the same spot on the counter every day.

Shiley shows up a few minutes later. Asked why he doesn't push a lunch order at opening time, more than 30 packs a week at the deli, he seems taken aback. Sandwich in hand, Shiley pauses, starts to speak, and pauses again. Finally he settles on this:

"I don't see these guys if I don't come down." ☐

Contact: mark@burlingtonpost.com

Capital Fireworks

the planning commission. In that email, Fraser clearly stated that he was preparing a memo informing Hallieth of her canceled responsibilities.

"So that didn't come out of the blue," Fraser says of Hallieth's email. "That was a response to me saying I'm going to do something about this."

In an op-ed in the *Record*, Hallieth's biweekly newspaper, Hallieth herself underscored her own argument that her firing was unexpected and largely inspired by Hallieth's corporate clients. In it, she quoted a summer 2012 email exchange between two city councilors who were clearly fed up with her.

"Back me. How do we get rid of this woman," Councilor Andy Hooper wrote in an email to fellow councilor Tom Golikoff. "Apparently the only thing worse than a know-nothing/don't-knowing Planning Director is a know-nothing/don't-knowing Planning Director. Period."

"I thought that was your #1 goal for the year," Golikoff responded. "We'll have to craft the language [just] a little more diplomatically in the press release."

In the two months after Fraser put Hallieth on notice in September, relations continued to deteriorate, as each wrote and sent memos accusing the other of a litany of offenses.

"I have been my rights as an employee and a citizen have violated," Hallieth wrote in one to Fraser. "Let me count the ways."

Adding fuel to the fire, Hallieth took her case to the *Record*, which cast the conflict as a freedom of speech issue. Soon, the story was making headlines throughout the state.

Upset with the paper's coverage, Hallieth wrote to publisher John Mitchell to complain about what he called "incessant distortions and false accusations." Mitchell, apparently agreed with the mayor. In an email to Hallieth, the publisher said that if he had not been out of town, he might otherwise have been more involved in this story's outcome.

"I admire your restraint on this matter, and, unfortunately, share your concerns, i.e. tone, direction and implications about how this story has been handled," Mitchell wrote.

Tenor Argenteo later wrote Pappas another no-ouch apology.

"Stories such as this, where conflicts of interest are raised among public officials, have to be explored," he says, noting that the paper has given just as much scrutiny to Gov. Peter Shumlin and Barnet Mayor Thomas Lutzow. "We felt that we did our due diligence."

Hallieth wasn't the only one to plead his case to a higher power. Six days after Fraser placed Hallieth on administrative leave in November, she wrote Shumlin and pleaded for him to intervene.

"Since municipalities are creatures of the state, I am turning to you for help," she wrote. "There must be a way to intervene in a case where it appears to me that there will likely be a miscarriage of justice."

Hallieth's letter to the governor did more than hint at a conspiracy.

"I have reason to believe that a search warrant and a computer forensic specialist might be able to uncover evidence that there was collusion between the mayor and the leadership of the Planning Commission, possibly as early as last post, to stall the work on the zoning revision and fabricate a 'performance complaint' about me as a cover for their efforts to stop me from talking about public building and complementary concerns," she wrote. "Could the state police be asked to investigate?"

Later in her letter to the governor, Hallieth suggested that "a private word to the Manager and the Mayor about the possibility of a state police investigation" might solve her job.

According to Shumlin, spokesersons for Allen, the governor did not respond to the letter or take any action.

"At what point is there a loss of neutrality?" Fraser says when asked about the letter.

Explains Hallieth, "I was very distraught at that point because I was realizing the city wasn't going to give me even a hint of anything like due process in my termination."

On November 26, Hallieth was formally fired. After Fraser's deputy denied her administrative appeal, Hallieth filed suit in January in Washington County civil court, seeking to be reinstated. Soon thereafter she declared her intent to run for mayor.

Asked at the time whether her candidacy was simply a reaction to her firing, Hallieth said, "Well, if I was still working for the city, I would be running for mayor. But I'm really deeply committed to the work I've done for the city. And I want to see it carried out. This is not about my grapes or anything. This is about the energy the people of the city put into the planning process."

So how would Hallieth feel if she were elected mayor and charged with overseeing the work of the city manager who fired her?

Not well, Hallieth suggests.

"You need to be able to work with people," she says. "If you look at my opponent's tenure here in Montpelier and preceding that, I think she's had some difficulty working with others."

Hallieth disagrees.

"If [Fraser] were as attentive to me and what I ask him to do as mayor as he was to Hallieth's request to get rid of me, I'd be fine with it," she says. "I have no problems working with him. I worked with him for seven years." ☺

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Political Feuding Fuels South Burlington Council Races

BY KEVIN J. KELLEY

The politics have gotten so bitter in the run-up to South Burlington city council elections that even party allies are trading. The animosity that has fueled council deliberations for the past two years could, larger still, after voters pick two of their five representatives next week.

The verbal warfare is particularly intense in a three-way race for a three-year seat on the South Burlington City Council.

Ratifying councilor Joanne Graco, who lost three of her five colleagues in a February 18 (overall) special, is also attacking former councilor and current candidate Paul Engels. A self-described progressive,

integrity and courage, and Tracy has all these and Paul does not."

Engels had asked for Graco's endorsement in the race against MacKenzie, noting he had previously won election to the council and had conceived his candidacy prior to Harrington's entry into the race. He ran unsuccessfully for the council in 2012 (under her former married name — Tracy Digley).

"You can continue to snail, dream and belittle me and encourage others to do so if you want, but I will not drop out of the race," Engels wrote to Graco in an email he forwarded to *Seven Days*. "There are plenty of people who do not support you and your crowd or Pam and her crowd."

MacKenzie dismisses Harrington's allegation. She says the state's open meetings law refers only to sessions at which the public business is discussed.

For her part, Harrington acknowledges that this session "may not be that big a deal," but, she adds, "it leads us down a dangerous path" toward closed-door decision-making by a faction of the council.

The city's interim-meeting regulations, adopted by the council while Graco and Engels were both members of the body, have been another divisive issue in South Burlington. Senemore, a commercial real-estate agent, was critical of what

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Paul Engels

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PAUL ENGELS



Joanne Graco



Pam MacKenzie

Engels had sided with Graco on some controversial issues during their time together on the council. For example, she had voted against issuing the F-35 fighter-bomber at Burlington International Airport.

Graco's hostility toward Engels, expressed on Facebook and in comments to *Seven Days*, was triggered by his refusal to drop out of the March 4 race for the three-year seat. Graco is supporting Planning Commission Vice Chair Tracy Harrington, who takes no position on the F-35, in a contest that also features Pam MacKenzie, the council's current chair.

MacKenzie — fiercely criticized by both Graco and Engels — appears likely to win this three-sided battle. Her two challengers may split the votes of those against her and the more conservative faction she leads on the current council.

"Engels is not never prepared for meetings and was generally antagonistic to matters before the council," Graco said in an interview when asked why she is backing Harrington. "To me, the most important qualities in a politician are compassion,

Fighting 'Poisonous' Politics

In the other council race to be decided on March 4, candidates Meghan Emery and Mike Senemore are speaking in generally civil terms as they vie for the second seat — with a two-year term — on the South Burlington City Council.

Describing the political environment of the municipal governing body as "poisonous," Emery suggests that "a lot of people are used of the negativity." A former councilor, Emery adds that voters are "looking to elect candidates who will create better working relationships on the council."

Emery's opponent in the race for the open seat says his aim is to "maximize human resources to collaborate to meet the challenges of our community." In order to reduce noise on the council, Senemore reasons, "you have to model the behavior you want other people to adopt. You have to listen, speak respectfully and acknowledge other people's viewpoints."

Senemore asserts that Emery and Harrington — Graco's preferred candidate — are aiming to win their respective

city manager's assent, the rejection of a headhunter's offer to build an addition to the Green Recreation Area and National Gendering Association's signature from South Burlington. These controversies are now in the past, Emery notes, arguing that voters will base their choice next week on each candidate's vision for the city's future.

But the present squabbling hasn't stopped. From the midweek, Harrington intervened at last week's council session to accuse MacKenzie and the two winners of the 2013 races — Pat Nowak and Chris Shaw — of violating the state's open meeting law. Harrington claimed that the three have had ignored a legal obligation to inform the public of their joint attendance at a meeting related to South Burlington's effort to win an energy award from Georgetown University.

"That was an absurd assertion," Senemore says. "There's nothing wrong with three councilmembers spontaneously deciding to go to a presentation about an energy prize."

amounted to a one-year partial freeze on development that recently expired.

In concert with the development freeze, the city created citizen panels to study aspects of the city's physical makeup and direction. Engels chaired one of these committees, which focused on formulating a zoning code that would put new emphasis on the appearance of buildings in relationship to their surroundings. He was ousted from that post in last year's power shift, immediately after MacKenzie replaced Graco as council chair. The job went to Senemore, a MacKenzie ally, in a move that still angers Engels and others.

"There talked about reconciliation after that election," Engels said last week, "but there was nothing but recalcitrance."

Money Plays Bigger Role

The bad blood threatened last year, when Engels asked the Vermont attorney general's office to investigate whether MacKenzie had misled the state's campaign finance law. She failed to file a disclosure report on contributions to and

expenditures by a political action committee she established to defeat Engelb and another of Goretti's named allies.

Markenzie gave an estimated \$4,360 to her Pam PAC. She told Screen Days last year that she had filed a disclosure but

TOWN

Most of the candidacies in the current election cycle have so far raised substantial amounts of money. The totals will be detailed in filings due 30 days prior to the

Bedlington City Center — an area near the city's high school that is intended to give the community a physical core. All five hopefuls also say it's vital to address noise problems, and the attendant depopulation, of the neighborhood adjacent to the airport.

MEETING

Muchnick, who runs a management-consulting firm, loans her experience in the private sector, having managed as many as 500 employees at a cable TV company in Cleveland. The 63-year-old politician also seeks to distinguish herself by suggesting she's the only candidate who has been involved in union negotiations. Next year the council will be hammering out contracts for fire, police and city hall employees.

Harrington, a 18-year-old systems developer for the Vermont Department

TOWN MEETING



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Feedback



publishing meetings about sensitive personal issues, I think Mackenzie must be upholding very high ethical standards. And I'm thankful whenever I encounter any politician with the courage of their convictions who is not afraid to go against public opinion; this country is better for it. I appreciated *Seven Days'* great reporting on the city council meeting [Off Message: Seth's Burlington Council Debates: A Mockery of Democracy? February 19]. In my view, Suzanne Greco's vitriolic speech reflects more negatively on her than anyone else, and the professional responses from her fellow council members made me think even more highly of them all.

Susan Eubanks
BURLINGTON

well-known Burlington busybodies like Charlie Tupper, Jeff Glasberg, Bill Tracy and Mayor Weinberger, among many others.

We go past Moran on our Segway tour of the waterfront and often have tourists ask us about this ugly industrial building. We recall the history of the plant and the attempts to renovate it over the years. I agree with Mayor Weinberger. This is the last best hope for Moran. If this project doesn't work, nothing will. It's time to fix this system. And, of course, that means demolition costs of at least \$2 million and possibly the loss of TIF funds.

The Burlington bike path is the number-one attraction on TripAdvisor for Burlington. Let's make New Moran number two. Vote yes on Number 2 on the March 2014 Ballot.

Rock Sharp
COLD RIVER

Sharp owns Burlington Segways.

MORAN PLAN FAN

I want to compliment *Seven Days* for your informative article on reconstruction plans for the Moran Plant ("Moran With a Plan," February 12). Of all the proposals I have seen for Moran over the past 30 years, this is by far the best and the most viable. My compliments to Ted Cooke and Erick Cronenberg for all the work they have done to bring together all the elements necessary for a successful project. They remind me so much of former governor Howard Dean and I in pursuit of the bike path in the early 1980s.

And that's what it takes to make a project like this happen: Two young spark plugs to put together a plan and doggedly pursue it in the face of all those who said it couldn't be done. But this isn't just two college students pursuing a dream. They have the support and available advice and influence of

DAIRY DON'T

The "Lake Champlain Is a Mess: Now Who's Going to Clean It Up?" February 12). So Vermont dairy farms were "bought out" in the 1990s yet they are still a major political power in the state. Vermont is dairy cows. I get it. But if Lake Champlain is the sewer it is because of Vermont dairy. We need to fix it. I'd like to see an honest appraisal of the costs of dairy farming to Vermont. Is it profitable or is it a subsidized business that costs the state more than it generates?

Al Jettie
SOUTH BURLINGTON

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DANCE

Hanna Satterlee's Dance Company Explores Its Inner 'Animal' in a Two-Year Project

BY KIAN CHIRND-WATEN



Hanna Satterlee and Co. in *Animal*

Owl. Snake. Nerd? Large feline? Those were among the words I jotted in my notepad while hanging out on the sidelines of the **CONTEMPORARY DANCE AND PRINCE STAGE** at Montclair as a history observer last week. I was there to see a rehearsal of *Animal* (DRAFT #1), the solo choreography debut from studio artistic director **HANNA SATTERLEE**. It features Satterlee, along with local movement artists **MAURA GABALL**, **MAUR SPEDER-SCHNEIDER**, **ANTHONY AND SHAWN GREEN**.

Rehearsal as "an aesthetically inclined dance piece that takes various abstract

conceptions to explore the animal self in all of us." *Animal* is a two-year series of public dance performances developed by Satterlee, who said she aims to showcase local dance talent and up the number of performances in her area. The project also has photographic and video components. Satterlee has tapped friends, an amateur fiddler to record her and her dancers performing the movement piece in nature.

The artists have been developing DRAFT #1 since last August and plan to perform over evolving drafts in indoor and outdoor venues across the state in

the coming years, with a final performance slated for summer 2010. They will present an evening-length, fully produced performance for the first time this weekend in Montclair.

As the dancers tapped, slithered and slunk their way around a makeshift stage, my brain went into overdrive, trying to keep up with the different animals they were embodying. I didn't realize, at the time, that my guess-the-creature game would have driven Satterlee nuts.

"It always makes me shudder when people say that we're trying to be animals in this piece," she told me after rehearsal,

over chat in a nearby cafe. "Because we're not trying to be any animal other than the one we already are."

The goal of *Animal*, Satterlee said, is for her and her artists to get better in touch with the "intuitive and instinct" that one associates more with the animal kingdom than with civilized humankind. But she initially took the task of "finding the animal within" fairly literally: The first segment of the piece is based on dancers going from the various stages of the spine to future humans evolved — from tail poles to four-legged standing animals to two-legged ones.

"It was like vertebrae, out of the back," Satterlee explained. So when her dancers make cat movements on stage, they're not pretending to be cats; they're trying to find the memory of a four-legged existence as their human spine's evolutionary past.

Satterlee found that her scientific research was a useful starting point — a "backbone," if you will — for artistic exploration in a performance that is her first foray into solo choreography. From there, *Animal* becomes more abstract, even improvisational. It plays with light, instinct, pack behavior, power dynamics and instinctive physical reactions to natural stimuli. Given the project's extended time frame, Satterlee was able to encourage her dancers to find movements that felt authentic to them.

"The movement [in the piece] is so complex and nuanced and strange, but so complex and clear in each body, because it was made based on them," she

A NEW CURATOR OF AFRICAN ART AT THE HODO BEGINS TO MAKE HIS MARK

BY KEVIN J. KELLEY

Corbin Smith's gallery, **HODO MUSEUM OF ART**, is recognized by local artists as being one of the most innovative art galleries in the area. Smith's gallery is located in the heart of the city, and he is known for his ability to bring in new and exciting art. Smith's gallery is located in the heart of the city, and he is known for his ability to bring in new and exciting art. Smith's gallery is located in the heart of the city, and he is known for his ability to bring in new and exciting art.

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The new curator of the collection of contemporary art in the Hodo Museum of Art is Corbin Smith. Smith is a curator of contemporary art in the Hodo Museum of Art. Smith is a curator of contemporary art in the Hodo Museum of Art.

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AS AN ARTIST, I COME TO THE COLLECTION WITH A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE.

UGUCHUKWU-SMOOTH NEEZE

Smith is a curator of contemporary art in the Hodo Museum of Art. Smith is a curator of contemporary art in the Hodo Museum of Art. Smith is a curator of contemporary art in the Hodo Museum of Art.



Master of Drone: Minimalist Composer Phill Niblock to Perform at Dartmouth College

BY ETHAN DE SEIFE

Composer Phill Niblock's upcoming performance at Dartmouth College, presented by the **HOPKINS CENTER FOR THE ARTS**, will almost certainly prove the "best" buzz on many an ear drum. The New York composer's minimalist music pulsates and drones enveloping listeners in lush waves of pure sound that are not only heard but felt — not least because Niblock believes that his artistic ideas are best realized by playing his work at high volume.

A fixture of the New York City experimental art and music scenes since the 1960s, Niblock is visiting Dartmouth for a weeklong residency. During his stay, he'll speak in several classes and meet with students and faculty invited to the college by Carlos Casas, himself a visiting professor of film and media studies. Niblock will conclude his residency with a performance in the school's Rollins Chapel on Thursday, February 22.

You could be forgiven for any pre-conceptions that avant-garde music takes itself a bit seriously, but Niblock's work is both breezy and playful. As his soundscapes "transmute" shimmery from speaker to speaker and on to ear, we get the sense of sound waves bobbling about, using each auditory cortex as a playing ground. While this can be challenging, listeners who are able to turn off their minds, relax and float downstream find a good chance of experiencing genuine transcendence at a Niblock concert.

"This informed us using microtones — notes that are very similar in pitch to other notes," says Niblock by phone from his home in Manhattan. "I tend to put them, as much as I can, in opposite channels, so they meet in the [auditory cortex, not in the speaker]." The result is a brain-pain-raising, up-from-the-deepths drone that allows the composer to explore the complexities of barely deflected sound in juxtaposition. In this way, Niblock's music is akin to that of "drone metal" bands such as Black Gills, whose guitarist-composer Stephen O'Malley is, in fact, a friend of his.

"My music... is very much a foreground music, not a background music," Niblock says. "You're really confronted with the music in the space. You can't dissolve out of it very easily."

The composer's work is not solely sonic. He is also a well-regarded

filmmaker who has, for nearly 50 years, been shooting scenes for what is essentially a single cinematic work, *The Movement of People Working*. Niblock, now 60, has long been fascinated by those people move their bodies while performing the routine tasks of their labor. His films focus keenly on the dexterous movements of farmers, fishermen and baristas, often shot so as to emphasize their grace and efficiency.

Niblock takes the unusual approach of eschewing the careful synchronization of images and sounds. The music is not "accompaniment" to the filmed images, rather, audio and visual trails

Cage, meeting him more than once in conversation.

Niblock's work has been celebrated all over the world, most recently in a massive, career-spanning retrospective in 2012 in Louisiana. The current year has also seen him working at an extraordinary clip: Between October 2013 and October 2014, he'll debut no fewer than 10 new musical pieces — the most he's ever completed in a single year.

At the Dartmouth show, four of

with vocals and sound, and has created images that related to the exploration of locations around the world," Casas says.

He believes the concert venue, a chapel on campus, is ideal for Niblock's performance because of its ritual qualities. "I would not say it is a religious experience, and Phill always hates when I speak about that," says Casas in a phone conversation, "but for me it [the music] contains a lot of spiritual or near-spiritual research."

YOU'RE REALLY
CONFRONTED WITH
THE MUSIC IN THE
SPACE. YOU CAN'T
DISSOLVE OUT OF
IT VERY EASILY.

PHILL NIBLOCK

complement each other via Niblock's minimalist approach to both media. Just as his films avoid narration and careful montage, his compositions forgo some of the most foundational components of music—rhythm, harmony, rhythm and even vocal structure itself.

"Everything I do," Niblock says, "is about stripping out a lot of the normal structure of the medium, whatever it is."

The composer's soundscapes employ no traditional instrumentation or arrangements. Niblock's music is created using, for the most part, an instrument over any other, and frequently inserting found sounds and electronically generated tones, with which he's experimented for years. For his indefinable musical exploration, Niblock was recently selected by the Foundation for Contemporary Arts to receive the 2014 John Cage Award. Its prizes, as Niblock plainly admits

Niblock's musical works, composed between 1955 and 2013, will be performed in conjunction with screenings of his moving images of Chinese workers, filmed in 1986 and '87. The concert's musical component comprises unprecedented sounds with live performances by saxophonist and composer Neil Leonard and the Buckle Interdisciplinary Arts Institute guitar quartet.

Casas has come to Dartmouth in part to coach, with music professor Ted Levin, a course called Sonic Landscapes, which combines concepts from visual arts, music, ethnography and ethnomusicology. Niblock's artistic approach harmonizes with the intention of the course. "Phill is a unique artist who has worked

Indeed, Niblock is a down-to-earth fellow, just as happy to talk about his coffee habit and what he's currently listening to (Eric Dulphy and Susa Prokofiev's piano sonatas) as he is about his drinking microtones. Still, as local sonic adventures now have the chance to discover for themselves, Niblock's music is hard to describe without evoking some kind of out-of-body experience. ☺

INFO

PHILL NIBLOCK: The Movement of People Working, with Neil Leonard and the Buckle Interdisciplinary Arts Institute guitar quartet, Thursday, February 27, 7 p.m., in Rollins Chapel. Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H. \$20-\$25. <http://dartmouth.edu>



Dartmouth's Student Thespians Deliver a Dark and Defiant *Spring Awakening*

BY ALER BROWN

Rock and roll is re-cast for expressing sex, dreams and youth. Authorities, adults, especially the Victorian kind, react in appalled all of the above. Let the creative audacious begin. *Spring Awakening* superimposes rock music on Frank Wedekind's 1891 play exploring teenage sexual stirrings in the repressive atmosphere of the German bourgeoisie. The risk is risky, but taking chances helped Steven Sater (book and lyrics) and Duncan Sheik (music) win eight Tony Awards and a Grammy on the musical's 2006 Broadway premiere.

A Dartmouth Department of Theater production exploits the work's dazzling contrasts and showcases a talented student cast. In the two main roles, Miss Gottschall and Daniel Gellert are polished, powerful singers who are not only at home onstage but capable of tackling the work's complex themes. The entire cast is impressive, from the four students who play the grain and chicken adults to a large ensemble playing teenagers, who range nimbly from timorous to rebelliousness to yearning.

THE HIGH-ENERGY "TOTALLY FUCKED" IS A FULL-CAST NUMBER THAT RINGS WITH AN EXHILARATING RESPONSE TO ADULT AUTHORITY.

It's a story of parents and teachers letting kids down at every chance. Wendla's mother is too inhibited to give her daughter a shred of sex education. With that combination of ignorance and innocence, Wendla (Haley Kuebler) stumbles into pregnancy but not before being overachieved with confusion about her feelings for school paragon Melchior (Gottschall). Wendla struggles with whether she wants to say no, and Melchior pushes past her resistance, her consent remains ambiguous.



The story of Moritz (Colomo) is unadulterated angst. He's a so-so student and now so preoccupied with sexual fantasies he can't concentrate in school. The strict headmaster is keen to tell him, in keeping with the school's reputation for selectivity. For Moritz's father, his son's grades on a social embarrassment. The two singers under the weight of adult repression and confusion struggle.

The story arcs are powerful, but the musical has outbursts of joy and exhilarating defiance. Director Jamin Morita excels at staging the pace and energy and fully exploits the libretto set designed by Georg Allen Mecklenbach. Morita is especially good at varying focus between the exterior and the big view.

Morita does face the challenge of dramatizing — versus stylizing — moments of sexual fantasy, masturbation, child sexual abuse and rape. Some choices are clever. A big number allows for a hearty enactment of masturbation, and the contrast between public, constrained movement and inner thoughts makes "The Word of Your Body" a dark duet about the richest content of all: love. Morita also sometimes lets abstraction replace enactment, such as in the paged projections that powerfully represent a character's recollection of childhood sexual abuse.

The intensity of "And Then There Were More" showcases the musical's

strengths. Morita can imagine to future now that he won't be punished at school and has earned his father's delight. His song is mirrored with Melchior's mother reading a letter in which she tries to console Moritz. While the letter offers fondness, hollow comfort, the song lyrics convey adolescent frustration. The ferocity of conversation rages in the contrast between a silly train for the letter and the boiling intensity in Moritz's voice. The production wraps him in a cone of molten red light, and the number ends with him counting out "another day of utter shit, and then there were none."

Musicals have always used song to convey strong emotion, and *Spring Awakening* amplifies the convention. For many numbers, the actors whip out hand microphones to perform, rockstar style, for the audience. And once they can strut, scream and pose, rock and roll supplies the soundings to open their hearts.

Sheik's score has the urgency of rock, slightly offset by pop's desire to entertain. The songs epitomize attitudes more than storytelling. In this production, the tunes are a jumping-off point for musical director Joel Mercurio's inventive scoring, which blends the precision of violin and viola with the fiery scrawl of rock bass and a contemplative cello with energetic jazz-rock guitar.

The percussion keeps steadily among all the shows, while the keyboards deliver mood and coherence. A show of successful juxtaposition: the music supports a show that constantly plays with contrasts.

Costumes by Laura Charis Kahn start with the rigid fashion of the late 19th century. The boys wear infatigable knickerbockers and not-grown-up school jackets, then Charis Kahn tones in rebellious Chuck Taylor sneakers to underscore the production's taste for modernism. The girls are raffish and sharp, with short laughs that make them doll-like. The tension between child and teenager is nicely captured with clothing that tries, and fails, to stay there.

Dan Kieferer leads a full cast of lighting effects throughout the show. The peak comes in a thrilling climax in the high energy "Totally Fucked," a full-cast number that rings with an exhilarating response to adult authority.

The choreography, by Keith Crapkins, centers on the songs. It's as if each a moment to just can make it dance, and allows the kids to express their anger. Their energy crackles and surges until the audience's feet are tapping too.

Today, we're much in validation of sexual desire, the dark fears of a teenager may seem to belong to an earlier, unenlightened age. The fun-to-die setting of *Spring Awakening* seems over-matched, long-vanquished that adolescent repression is a clever metaphor for the adult sex teenager faces. Inside, each led bursting out of puberty into dark and dangerous questions, hacking through the sweet fears, taboos and whoppers that echoed in Victorian ears. And put kids awake, one by one. ☺

INFO

Spring Awakening, directed by Jamin Morita, performed weekly by the Dartmouth Theater Ensemble, produced by Dartmouth Department of Theater. Through March 2, Thursday through Saturday at 8 p.m.; Sunday at 2 p.m. in Evans Theater (Higgins Center for the Arts). Dartmouth College is located at 100-100-100. For more info, visit <http://www.dartmouth.edu>.

WTF?

ARE THERE CATAMOUNTS IN VERMONT?

BY EDWIN HIRSHEN

On February 18, a reader emailed *Seven Days* an intriguing photo: a cat slinking through snowy woods near Griston State Forest. A pretty large cat.

"I live in Cabot and was driving down my dirt road yesterday when I spotted a juvenile mountain lion in the road," wrote the sender. "It ran in front of my car for 10 feet... It stopped to look at me, I grabbed my phone and was able to snap a quick picture of it before it bounded off into the woods."

The reader seemed certain that what she'd seen wasn't a bobcat or a lynx, but the creature that many Vermonters believe still roams the state: a mountain lion—or catamount, in local parlance.

Has this noble catamount returned to the state that still sees it as a sports mascot? WTF?

Mountain lions are common in the western United States, but both the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service insist that the native Eastern panther is extinct, and may have been since the 1930s. In Vermont, the last known mountain lion was shot near Barre in 1884, ending an era when the predators were such a nuisance that the state offered a \$30 bounty per pelt.

Yet dozens of Vermonters still claim to glimpse catamounts each year, from the Northeast Kingdom to Newington County. In January, a New York television station featured numerous reports of a mountain lion sighting in the Adirondacks.

"We got 50 to 75 [reported] sightings a year," says Chris Bernier, VFWD's wildlife biologist for big-bearing animals and the go-to guy regarding catamounts. When a purported sighting comes in, the staff logs it into their rare-animal-sighting database. Then it falls to Bernier to do the detective work to figure out whether a claim "is the real McCoy" which might involve sending a biologist to collect tracks, scat or hair.

To dispel the widespread belief that the agency is covering up the presence of catamounts, Bernier says he spends a considerable amount of time following up on sightings—sometimes working from "photos of terrible quality, though your imagination could lead you to believe this is a mountain lion."

"I would like people to understand that we do take these [sightings] seriously," Bernier goes on. "We have a GIS



Mountain lion

PHOTO COURTESY OF VFWD

database that allows us to track sightings spatially and temporally, so that if we do get an emerging pattern, at least we should be able to predict, 'Hey, we might have a mountain lioner two in that area.'"

All leads have run cold, though, many turn out to be "cases of mountain identity," says Bernier. For instance, the Canada lynx—an endangered species that seems to be making a comeback in the Northeast Kingdom—is a often mistaken for a catamount, although the lynx is much more diminutive.

"If mountain lions [were here], there would simply be more definitive evidence," Bernier notes, such as tracks, carcasses—"the car accidents or hunters"—or a definitive image from one of the thousands of game cameras around the state. "Vermont is not that large a state, and it's not that rural," he confesses. "It's crisscrossed by roads and human activity

everywhere, with the possible exception of the apex of the Green Mountains. So really, a mountain lion existing in the area is just going to show its face if we have a resident population."

By "resident," Bernier means "reproducing." Western mountain lion activity has been documented as close as Quebec, and a cougar carcass was discovered on a Connecticut road in 2011, so Bernier says the agency doesn't rule out the possibility that the cats are passing through Vermont. "We recognize the fact that mountain lions have the potential to come in the state in a transitory instance," he says. "The evidence is clear that mountain lions are widely dispersing animals."

Genetic research determined that the mountain lion found in Connecticut originated in South Dakota—which means it could have passed through Burlington County, observes Bernier.

Despite his skepticism, he says he's "perched" by the prospect that a dead might run out one day. "It would be as excited as anyone to have mountain lions on my backyard," he says. "I would love to know we live in a wild place. There is some sort of purity to the notion that, if mountain lions can live here, we're doing something right to manage our habitat. Though maybe that's my own delusional opinion," Bernier allows. "Statistically [it] to say, I spend a lot of my time on mountain lions, considering I have 16 other species [to watch]."

The reader also posted her photo to a Facebook page called Vermont Mountain Lion Sightings. Its administrator, Annie Shaffert, a South Burlington resident and devoted catamount enthusiast, had doubts. "I honestly do not think that this is a mountain lion at all," she wrote in a comment on the posting. "The shape of the face is that of a bobcat. Maybe it could be a lynx?" Shaffert added that lynx had been sighted in the history.

Other posts on the page suggest ongoing sightings. In January, one woman wrote that she was "pretty positive" she saw a catamount near Chaffee. "It was big and had a rabbit in its mouth," she reported.

Of the photo she'd seen, Shaffert told *Seven Days*, many are "not great, because I don't believe that many people out there can seriously tell the difference between a bobcat, lynx or mountain lion." At an average weight of 150 pounds, a mountain lion is way larger than the 15- to 25-pound bobcat.

However, Shaffert isn't troubled by the lack of a definitive mountain lion picture, "because sightings happen so fast. They happen when we least expect them [to occur]," she notes.

As for Bernier, he doesn't miss a beat when he sees the reader's photo. "That's undoubtedly 100 percent, definitely a bobcat, from the face to its posture to its size," he remembers. "It's a bobcat up to its belly, and it has no tail. If it was a catamount's tail, they'd be holding it up out of the snow."

And so the search continues. ☹️



Bobcat

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Dear Cecil,

I work at the deli counter at a natural-foods store and recently one of my customers chided me for suggesting she warm up her food by microwaving it. She said microwaving changes the molecular structure of food and makes it dangerous. Being skeptical, I researched this online, mainly by searching through your old answers. Your May 2005 column said the jury was still out on this question. Any new information?

Bet P., Charleston, S.C.



Heber and Boris Dullinger, in the journal *Angewandte Chemie (Applied Chemistry)*. Having reviewed the literature and done some experiments, they report as follows:

«Everyone agrees microwaves are far too low-energy to break molecular bonds and cause chemical reactions (boiling, whether done conventionally or with microwaves, unfolds or “denatures” proteins, changing the shape much as one might unfold a paper clip, so as that some it changes molecular structure. But it doesn’t turn the molecules into something else.)

• That said, laboratory microwaves cause a few things that are difficult or impossible to replicate with conventional heating. A reaction that might take five hours to complete if the starting mixture were simply heated can be accomplished in one second using a microwave to superheat the stuff in a sealed vessel. The fact remains: These are still thermal effects.

• Claims of nonthermal microwave effects continue to show up in the scientific journals, but in the opinion of Oliver, Bert and Dora, these are mostly due to

(a) chemists not really getting how microwaves work and (b) experimental error. A common problem is inaccurate temperature monitoring.

• For instance, a solvent the team led by one Dudley reported it had heated a chemical mixture to 100 degrees Celsius using both conventional and microwave heating. Huh, see, after 30 minutes the reaction in the conventionally heated mixture was only 25 percent complete, whereas in the microwave reaction it was 90 percent. Since the temperature of the two mixtures was the same, Dudley and friends concluded, this was evidence of a nonthermal microwave effect.

• As a side note, repeated use of three algorithms (Dean Dudley had used sensors that measured the surface temperature, not the internal temperature of the mix. The Austrians reran the experiment using an internal probe and found the reaction in the microwave and conventionally heated mixtures occurred at exactly the same rate.

One article won’t end the argument. But I’m inclined to agree with Oliver, Bert and Dora: Mysterious microwave effects (and presumably their attendant dangers) are a myth.

The jury was still out, although if my eyes don’t deceive me they just fled back into the courtroom from that in a moment. But first a word. Next time you just send me a good ol’ friend telling you that “microwaving changes the molecular structure of food” (those exact words are always used) back them in the eye and reply as follows:

“You’re 100 percent correct — it’s been scientifically proven that microwaving changes the molecular structure of food. THIS IS CALLED COOKING, YOU NUTWIT!”

Sorry, needed to vent. Back to the jury. Their verdict comes in the form of an article published last year (titled: “Microwave Effects in Organic Synthesis: Myth or Reality?”).

The answer is not to let the suspense build to a myth.

To recap, people think out about microwaves because they use (thermal) radiation; failing to grasp that there are two kinds of

radiation: (1) ionizing, the high-energy kind produced by nuclear bombs, radioactive elements and such; and (2) non-ionizing, the relatively low-energy type we encounter every day in the form of light, heat and radio waves. Microwaves are located between radio and heat (defined) on the non-ionizing end of things. When, therefore, we speak of “microwaving” something is the narrower, that’s not what we’re actually doing: it’s CHEMICAL EXAGGERATION FOR EFFECT, YOU FRIGGIN’ IDIOT!

Excuse me — trying day. Microwave heating is different from conventional heating because, whereas induced energy warms up pretty much any molecule it plays into, microwaves only affect molecules having polarity — that is, positive and negative ends, which rotate rapidly back and forth under microwave energy. By a common type of polar molecule is water, which, happily for us, is distributed fairly evenly throughout many foods.

So while ordinary heat gets absorbed by the water layer of a food and only slowly penetrates to the interior, microwave energy passes through most of the food as though it were transparent and heats up mainly the water, and to a degree the so-called polar fats and sugars which in turn heat up everything else. The food thus cooks uniformly (more or less) and it’s much less toxic.

But let’s be clear: Heating is heating. The mainstream view is that microwaves basically do what conventional heating does, only faster. A few scientists, however, think there may be what are known as nonthermal microwave effects of possibly ominous significance. Since precision microwave ovens have become widely available in labs an opportunity to settle this longstanding controversy is now at hand — or at it seemed in 2008.

Which brings us to the article cited above, published last year by Dora, Austen chemists, C. Oliver Kopp, Earthshakes

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Should Rape Victims Get Custody Rights?

A thirteenth-century trial of a man who kidnapped, imprisoned and repeatedly raped three girls over 11 years — suggested he could file for parental rights to the child born of one of those assaults. The judge summarily quashed the fantasy. Any such arrangement, he understood, “would be inappropriate.”

Still, Castro was technically correct. In Ohio, as in Vermont and about a third of the states in the nation, a biological father maintains presumptive parental rights, even if he threatened the mother in an act of coercion or violence.

Vermont needs a law — or perhaps needs to repeal one — to bury this monstrous relic of patriarchy.

Is it odd that last? The bill — which passed the House of Representatives this month and awaits Senate approval — regards the victims of a sexual assault “permanent sole parental rights and responsibilities” (Vermont’s term for custody), even absent a conviction, if clear and convincing evidence proves the rape occurred and the child in question was its fruit. H.R. 88 would become Title 18, section 663B of Vermont statute.

H.R. 88 covers stranger and acquaintance rapists. But the law’s sponsors have another perspective in mind: the man (and they are mostly men, in spite of gender-neutral language) who has lived and parented with, while also abusing, the victim — sometimes for years.

“It is a very, very common tactic for abusive partners to continue to control, intimidate and threaten partners through coerced action” — for example, threatening to challenge a mother’s child custody if she reports abuse or tries to leave, says Michelle R. Fay (D-St. Johnsbury), one of the sponsors. Fay is also executive director of Umbrella, an organization that supports victims of domestic violence and their children. “This law will provide some potential relief to survivors in violent intimate-partner relationships,” she says.

A righteous goal, but good intent does not always yield good law. “I don’t have any problem with the intent of this statute,” says Vermont Law School family-law professor Susan Apple. “But

it’s too broad. It would sweep within it situations we don’t want to have swept,” says Harvard divorce and parenting attorney Jan Paul Johnson. “What appears to be not complicated at all at first blush turns out to potentially be quite complicated.”

The complications arise immediately after that first blush. To issue beyond granting the mother the prerogative to live with and make decisions for the child, the law kicks the alleged rapist out of the family altogether; the judge has no discretion in the matter. “The court shall not issue a parent-child contact order,” it reads, any existing order “shall be terminated.” Unlike a “termination of parental rights” order would require the man to pay child support. It includes no right to counsel. And a 663B order would be permanent and unchangeable.

“The basic right to parent is taken away forever based on clear and convincing evidence, with no attorney’s assistance. Period. ‘Perpet’ Recall, chair of the Vermont Bar Association Family Law Section. “That goes too far” (Recall is speaking for himself, not the VBA).

Being shackled to your right through parenthood is an intolerable injustice. Losing your children without due process is equally intolerable and unjust. But the pain of adults is not the principal concern of the family court. The fundamental principle of family law is to act in the best interest of the child.

H.R. 88 says that dealing with a former husband is so traumatic that the victim may be unable to parent well, thus, removing that assailant is in the best interest of the child. But critics have their doubts: “Where is the child here?” asks Benelli of the bill.

Judges must now consider, among many factors, the safety and well-being of the adult victim in determining the child’s interest in custody decisions. Yet

in all but the most dangerous situations, family courts do their utmost to help parents continue knowing and caring for their kids.

If parents are not equal to the task, the state helps them become so. If parents can’t cooperate with each other, the court independently arranges the visit. If one parent poses a threat to the child, the visit is supervised in a public place, if he endangers the other parent, they can proceed without her involvement.

When the spouse or child must be shielded from an abuser, the court can issue “inhaler from abuse.” But even this

is necessary, in hopes the abuse can be stopped and the child reunited with the parent.

“This statute equates the child’s interest with the mother’s interests,” says Benelli, noting the unspoken (and illegal) gender bias in H.R. 88. “That doesn’t always work. What if the mother has substance abuse issues or is mentally ill?” Under H.R. 88, “every victim of sexual assault, proved by clear and convincing evidence, is automatically the sole and only parent that child is ever going to know.”

Certainly other unintended consequences lay propped. For example,



A minor woman and an older man have sex and produce a child. They break up. The mother wants the guy out of her life. She files for a 605B petition. The judge determines the parents' ages at the time of conception. Although the relationship was consensual, the law calls it statutory rape. Would this be sufficiently clear and convincing evidence? Yes, says Apel, without hesitation.

Even some supporters of the law consider it already far prime time. "It needs a lot more thought and redrafting," says Apel.

Committee members I talked to have faith that the law will work as written. Missouri? "The clear and convincing standard is a significant protection against any false claims succeeding," Fay says. No statute of limitations? (An alleged victim can come forward a month or 12 years later.) Time will finally erode evidence. Related accusations of statutory rape? That scenario "seems unlikely," says Fay — though it describes the case *McCabe v. Reed* (2007), which discredited the shortcomings of current law.

Anyway, says Vermont Law School professor and Vermont Public Radio commentator Cheryl Hanna, scarily: "We don't just pass useful laws because they might be missed."

Even less easily said, though, H.88 is a law full of trouble. Unlike criminal prosecution or civil litigation, preventive rulings aim for peace, not justice. They try to create stable situations where children and adults can get on with their lives. Family law recognizes that families are complex, that a person can be hideous to a spouse and still do a decent job parenting, or vice versa. That perspective and victims are usually oversimplified ways to describe adults in a couple.

In assigning those labels, H.88 has a perverse effect. It confuses the legal innocence of victims with personal innocence — goodness. "The victims of any sexual assault is presumed to be a

fit and better parent," says Benelli. The law "empowers" women by conferring moral superiority on victimization.

Assuming the victim is good, H.88 builds in no safeguards against the potential destructiveness of the instrument it creates. Abusive relationships are struggles for power and control. Divorce suggests that struggle, even seemingly reasonable people make false allegations of child abuse in custody battles. H.88 hands a vulnerable woman a weapon as potent as the laws it aims to prevent her abuse from wielding. Why wouldn't she try — or threaten — to use it?

Another irony of H.88 is that in challenging the gender "right" of the instrument, it reinforces the law's already strong bias toward biological over social parenthood. This is the same bias that denies rights to nonbiological parents in same-sex couples or to adults involved by blood who have cared for children.

H.88 enshrines the meeting of two genetics as the defining moment in the life of the family — so important that its circumstances can obliterate a parental relationship of any quality or duration.

But forget how the law represents women, men, sex or marriage. As Benelli asked me, are the children in H.88 Good judges take advantage of the fact that kids stubbornly love their parents. They bank on the power of parental love to move adults to change. H.88 forcefulness — an forbids — those possibilities.

By branding fathers from fatherhood, H.88 begs justice for abuse victims with the grief of their children. That is too high a price, and surely the last thing the drafters had in mind. ☐

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Sex Cells

A gay transgender inmate sues for the right to express passion in prison

BY KEN PICARD

For Martin Morales, life behind bars in Vermont isn't always dreary and successful. At times, she says, it's been a "breakfast experience of self-discovery" of her sexual orientation and gender identity—the ultimate in forbidden love.

Morales, a 34-year-old biological male who self-identifies as gay and female, describes romantic encounters that at times sound as innocent as a middle-school crush: an exchange of love notes in the library, mutual kisses under a cafeteria table, a surreptitious kiss during bible study. Other activities would get an NC-17 rating. For instance, Morales recounts smoking with a lover into a bathroom, huddling at trap chest for a sexual tryst while another inmate keeps the correctional officers or C/Os busy.

But Morales, who's serving a 12- to 25-year sentence for an armed home invasion in February 2011, insists she isn't into "casual sex on one night stands." Instead, she seeks out "emotionally and physically intimate" relationships with much older and "more mature" men. In fact, she's had several prison partners with teaching

her about "hooky" relationships that, for the first time in her life, don't involve drugs, alcohol, self-mutilation, domestic abuse or violence.

Unfortunately for Morales, such sexual healing among inmates is strictly forbidden by the Vermont Department of Corrections, so it is in every correctional system in the United States. Under DOC policy, any "sexualized behavior" by inmates is considered a "major R" violation

SEX ISSUE

that can result in disciplinary sanctions. Such behavior is defined as kissing, teaching, hugging, massaging, fondling or other physical contact "which predators or is intended to produce sexual stimulation or gratification." For comparison after major R violations include vandalism, forgery, moving a head count or tampering with another inmate's food to cause harm. (Major A violations include the most serious offenses, such as homicide, arson and racing.)

Morales has received several disciplinary reports, or "DIRs," for her sexual pursuits, some resulting in segregation from the general prison population. She's even been moved to other prisons—five times in the past three years—in keeping her away from her love interests, some of whom the DOC considers potential sexual predators.

In response, Morales has sued the Vermont Department of Corrections and its commissioners, Andy Pollitt, for the right to pursue her romantic endeavors while incarcerated. She seeks to have consensual sex without fear of disciplinary action being taken against her or her partners.

"I see this as a fundamental human right and a constitutional issue," says Morales, who is representing herself in a federal lawsuit filed last August in U.S. District Court in Burlington. In a 79-page lawsuit filed in compliance, Morales contends that the DOC's ban on all sexual activity among inmates is unconstitutional as it "does not further a compelling government interest." She says inmates should be encouraged, not punished, for learning "practical" relationship skills that will benefit

them once they've been released back into society.

The DOC doesn't comment on pending litigation, but legal experts and even prisoner advocates contacted for this story concede that Morales' suit has little chance of success, state and federal courts have consistently upheld bans on consensual sex behind bars.

Nevertheless, some observers say the case raises valid questions about life in the correctional system. Is it realistic to expect inmates to remain completely celibate for years, or even decades? If it's widely acknowledged that mutually consensual sex occurs regularly among prisoners, is there any way to allow, or even facilitate, healthy romantic relationships without falling down the slippery slope of permitting forced or coerced sex?

Morales doesn't fit any of the usual stereotypes of transgender individuals. She shows up for her two-hour interview—conducted during normal visiting hours at the all-male Northern State Correctional Facility in Newport—looking not too different from other male inmates in the visitors' room. She's 6 feet tall, 215 pounds, with short brown hair, broad eyes and fair skin. On the morning of her interview, she's dressed in a gray T-shirt under her beige, prison-issued uniform.

Morales hasn't undergone gender-reassignment surgery or hormone-replacement therapy—if she had, the DOC would have assigned her to an all-women's prison—not does she wear makeup, nail polish, women's clothing or other feminine accessories.

"Gender is a social construct," she explains. "I'm comfortable with my biological sex being male, but I believe my gender has both masculine and feminine components."

On February 13, 2013 Morales pled guilty to attempted kidnapping, hugging, aggravated domestic assault and violation of an abuse-prevention order. Two years earlier, Morales had broken into the Winooski apartment of an ex-girlfriend and robbed her at knifepoint. Morales, who admits she did it to get money to buy cocaine, expresses remorse for her crime, which she describes as "horrible" and "surreal."

Still, there were extenuating circumstances: Morales claims that two nights before the attack—both very violent offenses and criminal convictions—she confronted a Catholic priest from her hometown of Cato, N.Y., where she allegedly sexually abused her from ages 7 to 16 while she was an altar boy.

"I wanted some power and control in a sick way ever since," Morales says about her 2011 confrontation with Father Jeremiah Nazzari. "I wanted him to beg for mercy

and cry, feel what I had felt all those years—the anger, the fear, the shame.”

Morales left the only one to have made such accusations against Nunan. Her older brother, Ivan Morales Jr., a New York State trooper in Catskill, NY, has also publicly accused the prison boss of sexually abusing him when he was a boy. The sister, Maria, currently is in the Vermont Police Academy, after reported any such abuse.

In April 2012, their father, Ben Morales Sr., held a press conference outside the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany, NY, where he publicly denounced the priest for allegedly molesting both his sons, blaming him for Martin's "downfall." The elder Morales even provided reporters with photographs of thousands of dollars in cashed checks, payable to Martin from Nunan's personal checking account. Martin claims that Nunan offered the money in exchange for sex so she could buy alcohol and drugs.

"I always knew their relationship was a little weird, but I never put two and two together," Ivan says in a recent phone interview. "I just thought he was a normal guy period. It didn't make sense to me now."

The Morales' accusations led to Nunan being placed on administrative leave—and not for the first time. According to published news reports from April 2011, Nunan was previously accused of sexually abusing a minor back in the late 1980s and early '90s. Nunan denied the charges, which were never substantiated.

The district attorney's office of Greene County, NY, never filed criminal charges from the Morales' accusations, either repeated phone calls and emails by Seven Days to the Catholic Diocese of Albany to inquire about Nunan's current whereabouts and status within the church are unanswered as of press time.

Throughout her two-hour prison interview, Morales fidgets nervously with her hands and avoids any direct eye contact. Her inner facial tics may be due to her diagnosis of anxiety disorder, mild autism and post-traumatic stress disorder, she says, the last of which she blames on years of sexual trauma.

But Morales says she's been luckier than most gay and transgender inmates she's met. Despite being raised in a very conservative Catholic household, she describes her parents and siblings as "nurturing and ungrateful" individuals who "nurtured with love and support" when she came out as gay two months before going to jail.

Since then, Morales claims, they had sex as every conventional family she's been in—sex in still—and has some sort of "intimate physical contact" with another inmate every day. While she describes this

as "therapeutic," Morales says she is reluctant to tell her mental health counselor about her contacts: encounters for fear of getting her partner or herself in hot water.

Despite the DOC's official policy, Morales claims that many COs are aware of her sexual activities and, more often than not, turn a blind eye to them. While she won't name names, she claims that some have even sheltered her and others so that law-enforcement COs won't discover them.

"Don't get me wrong. There is some tolerance in here," Morales says. "But I've met some good staff. They've said to me, 'Many, you are who you are. I'm not in any position to judge or deny you your right to love somebody.'"

David Turner, the DOC's director of policy development, says the rationale for the no-sex policy in prison is obvious: COs and other law-enforcement agents rarely can determine whether a sexual encounter between inmates is truly consensual. According to Turner, one party in a seemingly consensual relationship could actually be strong-armed or blackmailed by threats against him or her, or against his/her partner or family members.

"Obviously if we are two people that give the appearance of being in a relationship, whether it's sexual or not, we're going to keep our eyes on that," Turner says. "We have certain obligations, based on the PRAA directive, to make sure we keep everybody safe."

I'M NOT GOING TO PRETEND TO BE CELIBATE FOR 12 YEARS WHILE I'M IN THE SEXUAL ZENITH OF MY LIFE.

MARTIN MORALES

On the morning of her interview, Morales says, she was out to a farmer's love in the life line. That inmate, who's serving a life sentence for murder, was in a "bad mood," so Morales sat by his side and caressed his hand under the table throughout breakfast. When they parted, she says, "He was all laughter and smiles." She describes it as "the healing power of intensive touch."

The DOC views such behavior as far less innocent. Corrections officials justify their zero tolerance for inmate intimacy by pointing to the federal Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) passed by Congress in 2003. The act, which applies to all state and federal correctional facilities, is intended to detect and respond to sexual assaults behind bars, whether perpetrated by inmates or staff.

Such concerns are well justified. A 2012 report by the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics found that more than one third of all gay and bisexual male inmates reported being sexually victimized by another inmate. By contrast, only 3.5 percent of bisexual inmates reported such abuse.

Vermont is one of the few states that provide condoms to inmates on request. But Barre/Barnes, the DOC's health services director, explains that Vermont adopted the policy in 1987, not as a way to condone prison sex but to stop the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV.

Barre/Barnes says it would be "reverse discrimination" for corrections officials to allow gay inmates to pursue romantic and sexual relationships, as Morales is asking to do, while banning

similar sexual activities among bisexual inmates.

Paul Wright, executive director of the Human Rights Defense Center, a prisoner advocacy group based in Lake Worth, Fla., calls such policies "discriminatory" and "illogical" because they equate sex with rape.

"They don't come right out and say it but basically they're sending you to prison so you're not able to have sex with anyone," says Wright, who was himself incarcerated in Washington State in the 1990s and later became a legal advocate and watchdog of the American corrections industry. "Most prisons also have rules against masturbation," he says. "If you think that isn't not being real on a regular basis, denial isn't just a river in Egypt."

What sets the American penal system apart from others in the world, he says, is that they try to destroy the ability of people to have relationships of any kind. Wright, who married and fathered children while in prison, points out that most states have either dismantled their conjugal visit policies, like Washington, or never allowed them, like Vermont. Mississippi, which had allowed conjugal visits since the mid-1900s, ended that policy two months ago.

But it's about more than sex, Wright adds. He points to the high cost of prison and phone services, restrictive visitation rules and the location of prisons far from urban areas as examples of how the penal system deprives inmates of the ability to maintain meaningful relationships with family and friends.

"If most prisoners are going to be getting out, how are you helping to make them better people from when they came in?" Wright asks. "If you accept the fact that relationships are a normal part of human existence, what are you doing to normalize that?"

For her part, Morales claims she's been subjected to more than a dozen PREA investigations. During her initial intake in the Vermont correctional system, prison staff designated her as a "victim risk" for sexual assault due to her gender identity and sexual orientation.

Nonetheless, since she went to prison in February 2011, Morales claims she's never once been raped or coerced into having sex. And, despite repeated efforts to help her away from her losses, Morales insists she won't stop pursuing her jailhouse affairs.

"I can't say anyone I have biological needs, and I'm not going to pretend to be celibate for 12 years while I'm in the sexual zenith of my life," she says. "Whether I prevail on the matter or not, I'm standing up for what I believe in." □



Downloaded photo of Martin Morales

In the living room of a modest family home in Colchester, Michael Rork moves nimbly at his iPad, flipping through image after image of suggestively posed ladies in various states of undress. Clad in gay pastel beds, demure negligees or pre- or post-nude-sauna dresses, the women in the photographs pose, wink and smile from the screen.

Internet voyeurism? Nope. Looking at the implied erotic distances playing out in these pictures is all in a day's work for Rork, he's slumming the photos for artistic inspiration. He and his wife, Athena, own Windsor-based Zinfandel Photography, the lone photo business in Vermont specializing in boudoir. The word once referred to a woman's bedroom or private dressing room, hence the photographs have a seduction theme, employing the soft, diffused light of glamour shots.

Boudoir's (usually) female subjects are often photographed in their actual bedrooms — or a studio made to look like one — and costumed and posed in ways that run the gamut from demurely coy to overtly sexual. The idea of photographing women in underwear may call to mind the supposedly tall, long-limbed models in a Victoria's Secret catalog that Rork maintains that, with proper treatment, any women can look like a supermodel in her slippers.

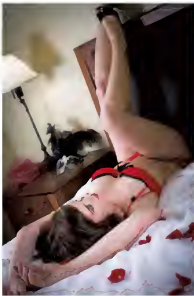
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THAN "SEXY."**

MICHAEL RORK

"When [women] look in the mirror, they only see themselves flat-on," he says, and notes that a woman's underlying insecurity is underlying to just about everyone. "But when I put them in front of the camera, and I light them properly and I pose them properly," Rork goes on, "they're able to see themselves the way their husbands see them, the way their girlfriends see them. They're able to see themselves in a way that they don't notice."

At her home on a recent afternoon, Jenna Gorys-Greenough is having her makeup done. For now, she's casually dressed in jeans, her hair done up in curls, and she's chatting away with Meg Walsh, Rork's makeup artist and photography assistant.

Gorys-Greenough is what Rork calls a "curvy girl," with the kind of voluptuous figure not normally seen in the pages of a fashion magazine. She's recently divorced, and notes emphatically that the photos from this shoot are for her alone (boudoir



Bedroom Eyes

A photographer finds a boudoir niche in Vermont

BY XIAN CHIANG-MARIN

photographs are often intended as gifts for significant others, Rork says.)

The appeal of a boudoir shoot, it seems, is as much about the experience as it is about the final set of images — and Zinfandel's clients certainly get a half-day experience. Gorys-Greenough, who works eight shifts, was up at 10 a.m. to get her hair done. She spent another hour in Walsh's makeup chair. Now she's chosen her platinum-blond hair: free of the curls, loose the joints, and slips into the purple-and-white negligée she bought for the shoot. Rork ready for about two hours behind Rork's camera.

"Shoulder in a bit, drop it slightly, pull your chin in — yeah, like that — drop the chin a bit, great," he murmurs. "Open smile, closed smile, beautiful! Gorgeous, Jenna."

In an age when Snapchatting risqué pics would hardly make a middle-schooler blush, it may seem strange that there's still a market for suggestive professional photography. And snigger still that Rork, a largely self-taught photographer, found such strong market demand in Vermont, where he and Athena moved in 2008 from their native California.

Rork initially launched Zinfandel Photography as a glamour and portrait

business. It wasn't until a friend requested a boudoir shoot that he began exploring that genre's lighting, poses and visual aesthetic. Rork added some examples to his portfolio. Then, he says, he began to notice that the boudoir images were getting the most attention — and generating the most requests.

Following this newfound passion, and his wife's advice, Rork refocused Zinfandel on boudoir. Since then, the couple has seen such an upswing in clients that Athena quit her day job to help manage the business full time. Rork recently signed on as Green Mountain Cabaret's in-house



SEX ISSUE

It's a testament to Barle's skill in putting his clients at ease, as well as his photography, that even a woman in trying physical circumstances can look like an ingenue in her images. One would hardly guess, for example, that Affirm Kirby was suffering from a serious illness at the time of her shoot. The young woman appears in Barle's promotional materials with well-hungared lips and black garb, looking like a siren on the handboard of a plush, softly lit bed.

Kirby, a Wisconsin resident, was suffering from a crippling bone marrow disease at the time the Barle was transforming their business to headier Affirm Kirby, a friend of Kirby's, offered her a free shoot if she would share her images to be used as Michael's business cards and website.

"The headshot shoot happened when I was at my sickest," Kirby remembers. "I was wheeled around in my pajamas, not feeling very sexy and... And it was nice. It was a ray outside of when I was normally doing. And then," she continues, "when I saw the photos, it was like a miracle that I was still, like, a woman, and not just somebody who was sick."

Kirby did recover — "That's another story," she notes wryly — but her medical experience was difficult in more ways than one. "Being in the hospital, you're walking around in ward hole gowns and changing and all that stuff in front of weird people," she says. "I had to drink this radioactive stuff, and people were literally seeing inside of me... You have to disengage from your body."

Being in front of Barle's camera, Kirby remembers, was empowering — a reclaiming of the dressing and undressing ritual. And she credits makeup artist Wally with giving her tips to enhance her appearance during a time when she *desided* hearing the words "Oh, you look so sick."

While his clients' transformations may appear dramatic, Barle stresses that he takes very little on the richness of Photoshop. Wally, for her part, sticks closely to natural looks. The outfit and context, too, are usually a client's choice — women are asked to bring whatever they feel comfortable wearing. Barle does bring along props, such as a white sheet rug, a 1950s telephone, redness and Champagne. The point, after all, is to create a bedroom fantasy.

Barle has limits, though. At the end of the day, Barle says, "I want [his clients] to recognize themselves when they see the photos. I'm not opposed to using Photoshop to remove an untidy nail, or something that would go away tomorrow. But if it's a scar, or something else that defines you, I'd never leave it. It's a part of who you are." ☐

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For more info, visit barlephoto.com.

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photographer, creating professional images for the burlesque performers.

Affirm Kirby has a straightforward explanation for headier's marketing appeal: "Every woman wants to feel beautiful, whatever that means to them," she says. "It's not [misleading] because their poses and their friends can tell them they're beautiful all day long, but unless they see it and believe it for themselves, it doesn't feel true."

Michael Barle says that in his experience, women of all backgrounds — and all personalities, from shy to vivacious — can be attracted to headier. Some clients come to experience and to embody the allure that Hollywood pin-up glamour and burlesque photography give to classic beauties such as Jean Harlow and Rita Hayworth. Some of the Green Mountain Cabaret members have requested private shoots in addition to their cabaret head shots. One such performer is "lonestar boy," who works by day as a cashier at Lareau's and acknowledges that a shoot with Barle adds up to a paycheck. But she says the experience is well worth it. For her, the appeal of

headier is similar to that of burlesque. Barle offers an opportunity to be expressive, open and creative with clothing and costumes in a way that reveals, rather than disguises, her nature. "The person in the photos is more me than the person at the [cash] register," she says.

Other clients uphold the tradition of giving a headier image to someone special for an anniversary or wedding, or to take overseas while serving in the military. But in the five years that Zinfandel Photography has been in the headier business, Barle says, some women have come to him for reasons he didn't expect.

"One of my clients on a summer of breast cancer and one of the things she said that really stuck with me was that [after undergoing treatment] she didn't think she could feel feminine again," he recalls. "That's what it's about. It's helping people feel the way they want to feel. It's as much more than 'sexy' even though that's what we focus on. Because that's what headier is visually but internally, it's about feeling good about yourself!" ☐

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Coming Around

When a sexually stressed couple shows up at the Cabot household of Dr. Israel and Cathie Helfand, typically one of the pair is planning to leave the relationship. It's not uncommon for that one to have a lower writing in the wings for the union to tank, and to ensure that couples' therapy is just a way to let his or her partner down easy.

But often, much to their surprise, that couple leaves the Helfands' Sexperts' Bureau having resolved their frigid sex life and saved the marriage. In fact, the Helfands say they have an 80 percent success rate with their intensive, three-day couples' sex-therapy program. That's impressive, given that they often deal with spouses who have bigger problems than just wanting to "space things up."

After more than 25 years in practice, the Helfands have pretty much seen it all. They deal with the golden-rules sexual dysfunctions—sagging sex drive, erectile difficulties, performance anxiety, trouble achieving orgasm—as well as more complex issues, such as a bisexual spouse, the desire for a sexually "open" relationship or an interest in bizarre sexual practices.

Obviously, the Helfands are pros at treating them. Many of their clients travel from as far away as India just last week, one couple flew in from Bali. Couples have come from Texas, California and British Columbia. Some are celebrities including entertainers and professional athletes. Others are individuals at the top of their careers—CEOs, doctors, surgeons. The Helfands also see a lot of Southern Baptists and other fundamentalist Christians, they say, especially ministers. Why?

"They come," Israel Helfand explains, "to want to work with me because they know I'm Jewish and I won't be judgmental."

The Helfands' "sexpert" consultations don't come cheap—Israel will only say the three-day workshop runs "many thousands of dollars." But to their clients, the advice can be invaluable in saving marriages that have been given up for dead.

Israel and Cathie Helfand offer Stern Days, some conventional thoughts about couples' sexuality, including their thoughts on the fragile male libido, the reason spouses cheat and why so many women masturbate to "The Daily Show."

SEVEN DIFFERENCES: What causes most sexual dysfunction in relationships?



Two Cabot sexperts teach couples to tap into their core erotic themes

BY JOCK MACLEOD

Cathie and Israel Helfand

BRADLEY HELFAND: Ninety percent of all the enigmas [problems] in relationships comes from family of origin, culture, religion and background. Only 10 percent is born out of the relationship itself. When couples come in complaining about their relationship, what they're not understanding is that they brought this problem into the relationship.

SD: You got started together in sex therapy in the 1980s, when open relationships were big. What's your take on them now?

CATHIE HELFAND: For the majority of couples it doesn't work. There are some couples who are polyamorous and it works for them. But the typical scenario is, the

guy says, "Gimme honey. Let's do this. It'll spice up our life." So she says, "OK," and ends up falling in love with one of the people they're looking around with, and then there's no turning back. It's a Pandora's box.

SD: Do you ever come out of the three-day retreat and tell a couple they're just not sexually compatible?

IH: I've usually done by the second day I don't want until the third. Compatibility tends to be a big issue. So in interviews, I ask couples "When you started having sex, were you attracted to each other's looks, voices and smells?" That's the biggest compatibility issue. The only thing that shows that answer is if the woman is an

the birth-control pill, because that changes her pheromones. It changes both how she tastes and smells as well as what she finds attractive in others' tastes and smells.

SD: Woody Allen once said, 'Men learn to love the women they are attracted to. Women learn to become attracted to the men they fell in love with.'

CH: I disagree. I think there needs to be attraction first in order to endure a life. People are living to be 80, 90, 100 years old. If the marriage is going to last 50 or 60 years, there needs to be sexual chemistry. And I'm not even talking about how good the sex is. There has to be chemical attraction, because you can't make that up. It's one reason people have affairs. They married their best friend, someone they really liked, they had a lot in common and they travel well together. But all of a sudden he's on a business trip, someone catches his eye and he can't get her out of his mind.

IH: Sometimes, affairs happen as a way of trying to save the marriage. I can't tell you how often I've said that and seen the tears roll down someone's face. They'll say to me, "I got everything else from my spouse that I want. The only area that's not satisfying is the sex, so I got that elsewhere."

SD: What do you tell them?

IH: After I reassure them a lot and say they're not alone, that's when we have to go into what is the core issue: these are the traits that they don't like and haven't shared with their spouse. We fall in love because of the things we see and like in each other. That's obvious. But what you might not know is, what really attracts the deal in making the decision is not just the attraction to the traits and attributes we like. It's the areas that feel familiar that we don't particularly like but that are familiar because we've loved them there in our family of origin. That's why when marriage is done properly, it can feel our childhood wounds.

SD: How so?

IH: Core erotic themes come from childhood experiences, and, more often than not, from traumatic childhood experiences. So, if it's the guy who gets off in the public restroom, chances are good that he has a story that goes something like, this "When I was 12 years old and started to masturbate, I grew up in a strongly ethnic household and my father never thought he should knock on doors because he thought

SEX ISSUE

the house was his domain. And I would send a message into the day to masturbate, but it was always evident that any moment someone might walk in? So this guy began to set up a stimulus response of getting caught and to his embarrassment, something as simple as that translates into his later in life trying to recreate that excitement of getting caught.

3D: After 25 years, have you discovered any fundamental differences between the ways men and women think about sex?

CH: Obviously, there's the stereotypical belief that women need to feel emotionally safe before they open up sexually. I don't

IF MEN DON'T FEEL DESIRED, THAT REGISTERS NEGATIVELY ON THE PETER METER.

ISRAEL HILFMAN

SD: Why?

CH: Because men are more sensitive than women when it comes to sex, and here's why: His sexual organs are outside their body, so they can't hide around. Either they have a boner or they don't. A woman can hide it. A woman can slip a little oil on and you'd think she has a puddle in her pants. Men tend to be more emotionally vulnerable because there's that performance anxiety, which women don't experience to the same way. On top of the actual performance, if men don't feel desired, that registers negatively on the peter meter.

3D: Are these gender differences when it comes to masturbation affairs?

CH: That is a general rule, but men tend to externalize them. They'll say, "Well, of course I had an affair because I'm not getting it at home. She's a beautiful woman and came on to me. What do you expect? I'm just a guy!" Whereas, women tend to internalize it and blame themselves. They'll say, "I was weak, I was lonely, I was horny."

3D: Your website says you treat chronic masturbation. Doesn't that define most of the male population?

CH: It does. It becomes a pathology in the relationship when it interferes with your work and you're getting fired because of it. You might be masturbating three times a day, but that's normal because you're 25 years old and need to masturbate three times a day. But if you're married and you're masturbating three times a day and don't have the stamina to have sex with your wife, that's a problem.

3D: Are there behaviors you come across that still surprise or shock you?

CH: One of the things I still can't get used to is people who get turned on by piercing and blood, women who like to have needles through their nipples. That still shocks me out.

CH: This was about 30 years ago. We had this man who was called an adult baby, somebody who wears diapers. He wanted his wife to change his diaper for him. He claimed there was no sexual intent on there. I just can't believe that's not erotic. At the time, we didn't push him. We were more dealing with how she was handling it. Today, I know what deal with it differently.

CH: What's interesting about that case is that the couple were only a few months into their marriage, and she married him not knowing he was an adult baby and found out the hard way. It's another example of how couples don't talk to each other.

3D: Tell me about this theory you have about Jan Stewart.

CH: I often joke with Israel here. I think Jan Stewart, on "The Daily Show," uses words — and I don't know whether it's on purpose or not — that have double meanings. He uses very words but not in a sexual context. So it's a very ironic show. CH: There are a lot of women who masturbate to Jan Stewart. You should put that in your next sex survey: "Do you masturbate to a nightly TV show, and which one?" I bet Jan Stewart takes the cake. ☺

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Fit to Be Tied?

Exploring Burlington's kink scene

BY CHARLES RICHACKER

When I first heard that members of Vermont's kink scene gather for a monthly event known as the Weekend Munch, it didn't occur to me that such a function could be, well, boring. Sure, the Munch's organizers did advertise its non-X-rated nature. On a page created for the event at FetLife.com, a social networking site for fetish fans, they asked people to dress "street legal" and refrain from bringing alcohol.

But when I read such sly directives as "This is a brown bag event — the only free hole that needs to be stuffed in your own" and "If you're entering from the rear (ya ha ha), go down the hallway and take a left," I wondered if there wasn't substance to the unassuming.

To my profound relief — or maybe disappointment? — there wasn't. When I reached the Burlington venue that hosted the Munch on a recent Friday evening, I entered from the aforementioned rear and walked upstairs to a large room where about a dozen people were mingling and eating doughnut holes.

A few people seemed shy in my presence. Other would-be attendees, I later learned, hadn't bothered to show up because they knew a reporter was coming. "Magda!" was a slight, steady-haired woman wearing jeans and a sweater, greeted me at the door (Like everyone interviewed for this story, she didn't share her real name, just her kink scene moniker).

"Some people are very protective about their privacy," Magda said. "You may go to a cocktail party and ask, 'Well, what do you do? Do you have any kids?' You tend to not ask those questions here, because you like to protect their privacy... Some people cannot

asked to have their employers know that they're kinky."

"Kink," Magda explained, can describe any sexual interest outside the mainstream. Other, the term refers to people who are into BDSM, an umbrella abbreviation for bondage and discipline, domi-

Ms. that — so 12 years ago, I really started experimenting."

If the Munch meeting seemed almost pitiful, that's because it wasn't meant to be a play event. Rather, these gatherings provide an open, safe space for kink-curious individuals to socialize about

The term "Munch" comes from the tradition of holding such meetings in restaurants. But attendees met in an artsy space on this particular Friday, leaping on couches around the room, clustering in groups and even using beds. The off-color humor present at the event's FetLife description was evident here, too, one woman could be overheard making an unimpressed joke about the size of her penis.

VASE formed several years ago to educate people both in and outside the kink world (the acronym are known as "venile") about the risks of BDSM activities, Magda said. It partners with the New England Leather Alliance, or NEALA, an advocacy organization for people with leather fetishes, to arrange discussions and classes on topics such as props for kinksters, spirituality in kink, polyamory, blogging and wax play.

If I learned anything by asking the Munch attendees about kinkies, it's that blanket statements don't apply. While Magda said she liked both rying and getting tied up in rope, they — a tall, bespectacled guy in a blue Oxford shirt and khakis who also sits on the VASE board — explained that he has no pretense for kinks. When it comes to bondage, he prefers handcuffs or Velcro.

A third member of the VASE board, a 23-year-old recent University of Vermont grad

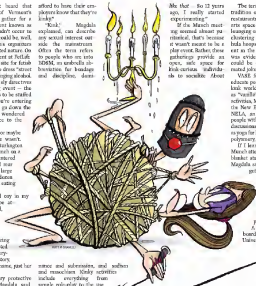
nance and submission, and authors and muscians kinky activities include everything from simple role-play to the use of ropes, knives, whips and electricity as partners.

"For me, it started with Nancy Drew, where she was always getting tied up in these ropes, and that always played my interest," said Magda, 44, the chair of the board of Vermont Alternative Sexuality Education (VASE), which organizes the Munch. "I remember every once in a while kind of thinking, I might not of

20 people usually attend, Magda's and people can find out about the meetings by following the VASE Facebook page or signing up for FetLife ("NoStitch" — after the "Game of Thrones" character — was already taken, so I signed up under the username "NoStitch109" instead).

calling himself Steven the Kinky, wore a dress, entered and a collar at the Munch. One of her interests, she said, is to play along like a car while someone else plays her owner. Rivers, who works at a bookstore, has tabled for VASE at her alma mater because, she said, "there's a huge drive for kink at UVM."

For better or worse, explained Lachar, a veteran kinkster at the Munch, more



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SEE PAGE 9

people are getting interested in BDSM, in part owing to the popularity of the best-selling book *Fifty Shades of Grey*. That growing awareness helps, Lucas said, because it brings kinky activities closer to the mainstream.

But, he added, "I get scared sometimes. There are people who are playing who don't know what they're doing." To give them guidance, Lucas teaches rope-bondage classes through Innovative Fiber Arts, a local organization that offers tying sessions several times a month.

Two weeks after the March, I caught one of those evening classes myself. The event took place in a different part of Burlington, with 16 participants sitting in chairs arranged around a carpeted room and Lucas standing with two other instructors at the front.

I participated in Bay Scouts and wrestling when I was growing up, and this class turned out like a cross between the two. To start, Lucas instructed everyone on the importance of getting consent from your partner. He played-acted doing so with another instructor named Tracker.

"Whether it's rope bondage or any other form of kink play that we're doing here, we're all trying to push boundaries — as whether they're emotional, psychological, physical — in a way that's oftentimes seen as taboo in our society," Tracker explained after his roleplay conversation with Lucas. "The way that we can navigate that with some reasonable amount of safety is to make sure that we're on the same page with our partner."

The instructors worked through a few lessons in tying knots and casting rope, netting in both drill sergeants and love girlys. After tying a minute or so, Lucas asked Lucas — the third (consenting) instructor — Lucas

playfully pointed out how the ropes around her "hudson" made for some "tan bondage action."

That it was time for the students to tie the same harness around a partner. My neighbor was Magda, the VASE chairwoman who had also come to the tying class, and I decided to be gentlemanly and let

her tie me up. Sitting cross-legged on the ground and wearing the undershirt I'd had on all day at work, I suddenly became aware of my failure to use deodorant that morning.

Magda tied the ropes around my chest several times, positioning it above and below my navel. Then, under instruction from Tracker, she used the harness as a foundation for the shrimp tie, an old-fashioned torture bind that left my arms behind my back and my chest tied to my knees. It failed me in half more like a daisy than a shrimp.

I'm not sure I developed an appreciation for the prisoner's lifestyle in that 10-minute exercise. It was rewarding at first, in the way an educating yoga stretch can be.

But after Tracker explained that people stick in the position for too long can pass out from the pressure it places on the lungs and diaphragm, I started feeling claustrophobic and welcomed the chance to get out.

Everyone else in the class listened closely as Tracker got to the last part of his lesson. The couples in the room seemed to take particular note as he explained how the top partner could lever the bottom onto his or her side, into a position that provided "access to the naughty bits because of this full exposure."

Maybe, I thought, I shouldn't be so vanilla after all. ☺

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Pop Culture

How a balloon fetish inflates one Rutland man's sex life

BY KATHRYN FLAGG

Leither at late, high heels or handcuffs — when it comes to fetishes, “You can attach your erotic needs to just about anything,” says Burlington clinical sociologist Gale H. Golden.

For Chris Barney, “anything” happens to be balloons. And for years, Barney, who turns 30 this week, kept that little secret, convinced that no one else could possibly find sexual pleasure in something as strange as inflating and popping a balloon.

Turns out, he’s not alone. New Barney is a regular in a vibrant online community of self-proclaimed “loamers” and he’s speaking out about his fetish.

Fetishes “are such a taboo, and not many people understand,” Barney says. “I don’t want other people to feel ashamed.”

Barney is what is known in the loamer community as a “popper” — someone who gets off on balloons popping. In footage shot for the Learning Channel’s show “Strange Sex,” he appears excited, breathless and a bit nervous as he blows up an enormous orange balloon. “That was awesome,” he says, giddy and shaking, after the balloon pops. Doing it himself is enough to bring him to orgasm. But, as he explains in a *TwoTubes* video called “Why I Have a Balloon Fetish,” he especially loves watching women blow up balloons until they burst.

If that strikes you as hard to understand, join the club.

“I still to this day don’t understand why it does it for me, but it makes me happy,” says Barney, who isn’t hushful about discussing the subject over coffee in a downtown Rutland cafe. He sports a goatee and close-cropped hair, along with top and cheek piercings. At 6-foot-3, he’s a soft-spoken, gentle giant type, a big guy who until a few years ago had a big secret.

A sexual fetish, by definition, is a preoccupation with a particular material or body part. Someone with a fetish might get turned on by feet, or by the feel of silk or latex, or by the experience of wearing someone’s underwear, explains Golden, whose latest book, published in 2008, is *On the Edge of Desire: A Therapist at Work with Sexual Secrets*. She’s emphatic about what a fetish is not: a disorder, at least in most cases.

“The word ‘fetish’ connotes with dysfunction,” flags “bad,” says Golden. “But it isn’t necessarily any of those things.”

Golden acknowledges that fetishes can cause problems, particularly when they interfere with people’s work, life or relationships, or when a fetish becomes a requirement for functioning rather than an occasional turn-on. But in other cases, she says, fetishes simply provide spice in the bedroom. (Barney’s fetish fits into the second camp: while balloons provide a source of pleasure, they aren’t mandatory for his sex life.)

“Who are you really turning it on when to masturbate in the privacy of your home and are looking at pretty face?” Golden asks.

**I STILL TO THIS DAY
DON'T UNDERSTAND
WHY IT DOES IT FOR ME,
BUT IT MAKES
ME HAPPY.**

CHRIS BARNEY

Pinning down the origin of fetishes is tricky. Researchers make errors out of trying to understand, doing, “Sex really is a very very powerful thing that is very elusive,” Golden says. “Everybody keeps trying to grab at it — ‘What is it, what is it, what is it?’ — but the power of the erotic is just overwhelming.”

Golden subscribes to the theory of “imprinting,” which holds that a fetish forms mostly in childhood. That’s certainly the case for Barney. His behavior has fetish evolved out of an early childhood fear of balloons, he remembers being “ashley afraid” of them, particularly of the loud noise of their popping.

By the time he hit 7 or 8 years old, Barney says, the fear began to be tinged with an almost euphoric feeling — nervousness, fright and excitement all paraded together. But he was ashamed of the foundation. As a teenager, he’d shoplift to sneak balloons into his home, anxious that his parents find out about his strange obsession.

All the while, Barney says, he assumed he alone had this strange fetish, it wasn’t until he was 19 and watching late-night HBO at a friend’s house that he learned about the larger fetish community. The show made a brief mention of balloons. Barney typed “prh with balloons” into an online search engine, and his job dropped.

“I was shocked to find that there was an entire community. It was probably one of the most enlightening feelings I’ve had in my entire life, knowing that I wasn’t the

SEXISSUE

only person out there that shared this," Burney says. "And there were so many people I can't believe how many loonies there are out there."

Even after plunging into the online fetish world, Burney concealed his loonier love from friends and family. That slowly changed in his mid-twenties, when Burney was diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma. His father died six months into his chemotherapy treatment. Burney, who had briefly relocated to Pennsylvania, moved back to Rutland after the two hard blows. He says he felt increasingly that, at a terrible time in his life, it was important to be true to himself.

"I felt like I was lost, and this was the only thing I could do to branch out," Burney says. He began outing himself to the other people in his life. His mother was supportive. Friends were a little confused at first, though his reaction was strange, Burney says, but it didn't ruin any relationships.

bigger, the better," he says. While he calls the look harmless, he does advise other loonies, especially "poppers," to wear glasses and earplugs as a precaution.

He shops online specifically to loonies. Burney says, but remains openly hostile to manufacturers carry appropriate products. When he discovered them, he jokes, he thought they were all but designed with loonies in mind.

Every looner goes to a different kind of balloon, Burney notes. "It's the color preference, it's the way it looks, it's the size of it," he daydreams about someday opening up an online shop for loonies who often go through international sellers and pay hefty shipping and handling fees to obtain specialty balloons.

Currently unemployed, Burney aspires to be a photographer and filmmaker. So far he's dabbled in senior prom, wedding clips on the website Clips4Sale.com, which specializes in fetishist fare. His ex-loonies



SCAN THIS PAGE WITH THE LAYAR APP TO WATCH CHRIS BURNEY ON THE LEARNING CHANNELS PROGRAM 'STRANGE SEX'

SEE PAGE 9

Next Burney started speaking publicly about his fetish. That included doing an extended interview on an episode of "Strange Sex" and starting a YouTube channel. He now has more than 60 clips on YouTube, and runs a Facebook group called "Loonier Mayhem" with more than 900 followers. Burney also participates in the online social networking site BitLife.com, which advertises itself as the world's most popular free social network for the BDSM fetish and kink communities.

"People in the world are either very hateful towards me, or are like, 'Wow, you're so lucky,'" Burney says.

Why lucky? He has a go-to kink that he knows will turn him on, he explains a trick that never fails to bring pleasure.

When it comes to condoms, Burney isn't talking about popping party balloons you'd pick up in the grocery store. "The

took a starring role in many of those films, in one YouTube trailer she appears surrounded by inflated balloons. She never took her clothes off. Burney says. The couple's clips still make money.

The two recently separated, but Burney says their breakup wasn't related to his kink. He goes back to his ex, who's still a friend, for being supportive. When dating, he says, he takes the risk of telling women sooner rather than later about his unusual turn-on.

"And if they like it, then party on," he jokes. If not? Burney isn't interested in hiding that part of his life, he says, and would rather know early on that a potential partner isn't down for the occasional balloon in the bedrooms.

"Why would you want to live your life miserable and not happy?" asks Burney. "I want to be loved for me." □

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The Taste of Others

A Montréal aphrodisiac restaurant feeds more than one kind of appetite

BY ALICE LEVITT



Affiche: wine, chocolate, glass



Gustave Barolo has tried it all: honey goat weed, sautéed pears, leeks. He's swallowed Viagra and Cialis for the cause. In fact, the restaurateur says he's experimented with more than 50 different substances known for aphrodisiac properties over the past three years. Barolo has no problems with his own potency, he notes — he just wanted to make sure diners at his new restaurant wouldn't, either.

At *Atome Restaurant Aphrodisiaque* (debuted last October with a menu by executive chef Athine Phrasme) that borrows from Barolo's research. A restaurant consultant and bartender by trade, Barolo bills *Atome* as "the first aphrodisiac restaurant in North America." That's not quite true. A quick Google search reveals restaurants with a similar theme in California and Florida. But Barolo's concept, associated by chef de cuisine and recent "Chopped

Canada" competitor Pat Vachon, is evidently the first of its kind in Montréal, or Canada.

I've explored the lounge side of Montréal dining for seven days before, with trips to a topos diner and a free lunchtime buffet at Club Supremes. At *Atome*, I was ready for something tripping but a little more refined.

SEX ISSUE

"You're talking about sex if you don't do it the right way, it could be vulgar, it could be cheesy," Barolo acknowledges. His goal for the restaurant can cater-to-all gallery is to create a sexy ambience for the over-30 crowd while avoiding those pitfalls.

My boyfriend of 30 years and I walked through the slush of ice

Saint-Denis on Valentine's Day weekend to test Barolo's guarantee: "If you don't get lucky, I'll give you your money back." We were greeted by an extremely muscular host in a too-tight shirt with a tie and shiny suspenders. He looked like a WWE wrestler at a press conference.

The all-white room, plush enough to satisfy the expectations of *Elle's* current rider, was filled with couples celebrating the holiday. Many looked 40 or older, though there was a wide mix of ages and races. I was surprised to see that all of the pairings appeared to be hetero.

Atome squeezed nearly 500 people into its dining room on Valentine's Day weekend, according to Barolo. The new restaurant was an obvious choice then, but as *Atome* maintains the tradition "It sounds lame, but it's Valentine's every weekend [here]," says Barolo, who is well aware that he is walking a fine line between hot destination and

punch line. "We tell the servers, 'Keep in mind that these people are having a very special night. Keep in mind it's more of your business, but these people are going to be making love two hours from now.'"

Was that what my server was thinking about me? More comfortable with French than my boyfriend, James, I did all the ordering from the four-course prix-fixe menu that *Atome* offered that weekend instead of its regular bill of fare. That meant I was stuck telling our petite waitress that I wanted *Jo Jo Mangerie* (that's *Jo Jo*), *Jo Jo Mangerie* (that's *Jo Jo*), and *Jo Jo Mangerie* (that's *Jo Jo*). I was stuck telling our petite waitress that I wanted *Jo Jo Mangerie* (that's *Jo Jo*), *Jo Jo Mangerie* (that's *Jo Jo*), and *Jo Jo Mangerie* (that's *Jo Jo*). I was stuck telling our petite waitress that I wanted *Jo Jo Mangerie* (that's *Jo Jo*), *Jo Jo Mangerie* (that's *Jo Jo*), and *Jo Jo Mangerie* (that's *Jo Jo*).

THE TASTE OF OTHERS BY ALICE LEVITT



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SIDEdishes

BY COEN HIRSCH & ALICE LEVITT



Golden Glugs

OLIVE VINAGRETS ARE ESSENTIAL TO DRINKING IN THE CAPITAL CITY. Montpelier will soon gain a new taproom—but it won't be pouring porters or IPAs.

Instead, the owners of **ALLA VITA** plan to supply the Capital City with high-quality vinegars and extra virgin olive oils when they open their retail shop and take-out lunch spot at 27 State Street next week.

Co-owner **ANDREW BROWNE** says she and her partner, **CHRIS GREGG**, have wanted to open a business together for years—and the idea of selling single-ingredient oils and vinegars won them over. Some of the oils, Browne says, "have this great pungency and taste you properly might make you cough a few times." The partners chose the name *alla vita*, meaning "to life" in Italian, because, says Browne, "the health benefits [of EVOO] are amazing."

The oils are sourced on both hemispheres, then delivered "almost immediately" to all-vino and other outlets after pressing. Browne adds, "(Bar/restaurant) **BARBARA** **BARBARA**... it serves the same supplier." Customers will be encouraged to sample the offerings freely by free choosing the oils or vinegars they'd like the staff to bottle for them.

While extra virgin olive oil alone may not be as exotic as wine, **Browne** and **Gregg** also plan to offer gourmet salads, boutique wines and to go lunches of a Mediterranean bent, including pressed sandwiches, chopped salads dressed with the store's oils and vinegars, and a daily soup.

The store will open the week of March 4, **Browne** and **Gregg** plan a March 21 grand opening with tastings and food samples.

—A.L.

Entrées & Exits

GOOD-BYE IN BURLINGTON AND HARDWARE HELLO IN MANDOLINI

Randolph's dining room since confirms: In mid-March, the town's historic Union Block will become home to a new hangout when **OUR MANTAP** and **BAR** opens at 2 Merchants Row.

Owners **SHANE HARRIS** and **JESS HARRIS** have collaborated on various businesses over the years. "This was just the best location, right in the center of town, and with large windows," says Miles.

"They've completely renovated the former site of **Peter's Place**, opening up the interior for an "art" feel and erecting an 18-seat bar and a 24-top system. Will local beers flow there?

Bleu Horizons

SEAFOOD AND HIGH-CLASS FARE HEADS TO CHERRY STREET. The latest addition to Burlington's seas Cherry Street restaurant now will arrive this spring, hopefully by the end of April, says chef **DOUGLAS PINE**. Construction of **BLEU HORIZONS** SEAFOOD is in progress at the **HANNOY** **CONVENT** BUILDING HARBOUR. The restaurant will join **JANISSE**, also helmed by Pine, and **SEA OF THE WOOD**, both located near door to **WATER VENTURE**. Wharf Hospitality owns both hotels.

Pine already has an early version of the menu for **Bleu**, which will serve breakfast, lunch, dinner and weekend brunch and focus on regional seafood, much of it brought to Vermont by **WATERHOLE**.

Oysters will be a staple at all meals, served fried in part of a Benedict at breakfast and freshly shucked at dinner. The evening menu also includes rich seafood soups made with scallops, lobster, fresh crab sea urchin, bechamel, handmade pasta and burrata.

There's plenty for foodies, too: **Beef** fries and coq au vin grace the dinner menu. At breakfast, a Maine lobster tartar is balanced by croissant French toast and an egg topped breakfast. **Reservations**: On weekends, a brunch buffet includes a **Bloody Mary** bar, a raw bar and prepared dishes.

Not to be outdone, **Janisse** will introduce a new trout this summer. Pine is currently hiring a pizzilla, or Argentine open-fire business, both for weekly made nights. He says it was inspired by several of the hotel's owners are during Wharf Hospitality's annual meeting in Argentina earlier this winter. A portion of each week meal will benefit Argentine winemaker **Edoardo Joly**, charity **Pandora** **Romero**, dedicated to making Argentine more wheelchair accessible.

"It really kind of fits perfectly with Hotel Vermont," Pine says. "We cook local beef, chicken and pork on the custom grill, then serve them family style with salad, fresh bread and a range of sides."

—A.L.

"Yes, not exclusively, but the majority," Miles says.

Diners will be able to choose from a range of small plates and pub fare with locally sourced ingredients, such as wings, salads, grass-fed beef burgers and a shepherd's pie spiked with herbs and topped



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The Taste of Others

it came to asking for Entrée *Mus Canais* (between my thighs). I couldn't help but giggle. "It's fun to say, *non*?" asked the server in English.

She was right. But I wasn't turned on yet. Neither was Anna. He said he was at "about a four" on a scale of one to 10.

Things improved a bit when *Mise-En-Place* Gamber took to the tiny stage, just behind us. To cater to couples, Barrolo had replaced the usual burlesque entertainment with *musiciens*. If talent is a turn-on, then the floppy-haired former child prodigy fit the room's collective rather regally ablate with his virtuoso violin work.

To the tune of Gamber's Latin-inflected melodies, we dug into the "bouchées" (*little kisses*). A slightly chunky watermelon and strawberry wrap came served in a Champagne flute, but beyond that, the dish didn't seem particularly erotic.

Freshly cooked temp chips tossed in lightly spicy tapenade made us feel something, though it was more on my tongue than deep into calories — which

would be a great reason for a dish at *Atome*.

The next course did the job better. The dish described as beef carpaccio was actually scored slices of flambéed meat coated with crushed, vanilla-

**GOAT CHEESE MAY SOUND
LESS THAN EROTIC,
BUT THE BIG CRUMBLES ON
LE JARDIN D'APHRODITE
MADE THE SALAD THE MOST
STIMULATING DISH OF THE NIGHT.**

scented musk beans and cacao, then topped with microgreens. The three corners of the plate contained tiny piles of molecular *Olfine* ("urine"), *Peanut* and a sweet reduction of French shallots in white wine and honey, respectively. A dark swirl of Cabernet reduction drizzled the whole plate. Was it sexy? I've always admitted that the

scent of roasting tallow gets me going, so biting into beef and tasting the hint of animal musk was a little closer to the goal.

Goat cheese may sound less than erotic, but the big crumbles on *Le Jardin*



Aphrodite (*Aphrodite's garden*) made the salad the most stimulating dish of the night. Tender roasted peaches and sweet, crumbly baci-facts over arugula provided enough variation in texture to make for a sensual experience already. But the firm *Chèvre des Neiges* from local fromagerie Alexis de Portet was a surprising treat: melting slowly with

the warmth of my mouth as it oozed oozing, gooey, slightly tangy cheese. Sound like a weird romance novel? It tasted like one.

By that time, singer Sly Sly Schallie had taken the stage. The plump cabaret chanteuse sang in English with a pleasant purr, but I couldn't help but feel giddy to a giggling fit when she began lasciviously intoning "Chien Chien Chien" from *Mary Poppins*. How did that wrap get so lucky? Maybe he ordered Entrée *Mus Canais*.

I love a nicely braised bite of chicken as much as (or probably more than) the best gal, but poultry isn't one of my top turn-ons. So the chicken leg-and-thigh dish with that enticing sauce had to be a must-have to get me hot and bothered. Its chocolate sauce was delicious but ultra-thick.

Luckily, at this point a skin, suit-wearing server entered to offer as a sign of traffic all on such of our desires. The earthy oil thinned the sauce on the chicken, but its greater accomplishment was lending its own erotic properties to the deep, dark chocolate. A pair of burlesque carrot *paries* and a roasted pepper on top of the braise

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|| SIDEdishes

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A3



Want to be a lay part of the "foam that food sends" — author Ben Hewitt's memorable phrase for *Hardcore*? Groundbreaking community-supported **CLARK RESTAURANT** & **BAR** has been on the market

for a year, but the search for a new owner is now growing more than ever. The restaurant, which opened in 2008, will close on March 4. Current owner **ANNA RUSSELL** says that when

she bought out former co-owner **MIKE KINCAID** and **STEVEN BRANNOWITZ** in 2012, "I was clear that I considered myself a transitional owner, and I was looking for the right person who wanted Clark's."

That Thursday, the restaurant will celebrate its last days — for now — with a music night featuring popular band **Gracie Jeanette**. "I'm really hopeful about what happens next," says Russell, also the owner of **Gallery Bookshop** next door. "I've done what I can do."

Burlington's KANAN opened in July 2013. Last week it closed its 131 Main Street location, but doesn't count it out yet. The owners is "only a temporary income decrease" cited by the loss of the restaurant's space, says co-owner **CHASE KANAN**, also the man behind **Burlington's SAM JAY JAPANESE RESTAURANT** and

BAR, along with **BAZILLON** **BAR**.

The Vermont Music apt was up for sale before **Kanan** moved in, **Kanan** explains. A potential investor who could have helped **Kanan** and **Moss** buy it dropped out, leaving them out. **Kath McMillan** of **Apples & Bay Property Management** says the new owner will open his own business in the space, but isn't reveal whether that will be another restaurant.

"[Kanan] wasn't a failure," says **Kanan**, who maintains that new management has made significant improvements to **Kanan's** first. "Expect it to return in a different incarnation."

—ALBCH

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added sweetness, but I wish one of the ingredients had, instead, possessed sufficient tang to rip through the heavy sauce.

The heart-shaped steak earned its "foxy" century name, though the *may dressing* was cooked to an uneasy medium-well. The touch of truffle lent a lingering richness to the white wine and gochujang sauce that dressed the meat. Tender carrots, mushrooms and crunchy chunks of potato made for a hearty dish, but it evoked a cold winter evening more than a torrid nighttime rendezvous.

Maybe it was our exhausting lunch of all-you-can-eat Korean barbecue, but **James** and I seemed to be riding the seduction short bus. A couple across the room had moved from holding hands to a full-on make-out session. Apparently they hadn't had the foresight to reserve one of **Anzane's** two private rooms, located in converted stalls near the bar.

Seven days hence, back at those doors before bringing the next course, **Barcelo** assures, and they've experienced some long waits. Since the private space is booked, he says he's currently making sure there are no restaurants that could

stymie his goal to add a third "love bathroom."

For now, **Barcelo** says, he won't stop couples from having sex or making out in private areas. According to local laws, as long as **Anzane** doesn't promote or allow the private moments, anything



Photo: **Barcelo** / **Anzane** gochujang sauce

goes, he says. "Roadster" performances and *Pink Shades of Grey* theme nights satisfy diners with a more voracious eye. Roadster gear isn't out of place at **Anzane**, given that *Agustina* native **Barcelo** named the restaurant after his favorite movie, *Pedro Almodóvar's The Me Up, The Me Down* (called simply *Anzane*), or "the me up" in Spanish).

We wound down our meal with a plate of fast-food heavy sweets. A chocolate dipped fig and strawberry for each of us accompanied a single cherry chocolate brownie topped in salted caramel. On the side, a fluffy Avocado milkshake provided half a dip for the chocolate treats and a cool sip on its own.

At \$35 a head for the prix-fixe, we'd decided to skip cocktails. It was probably a bad decision. The *Saltly Old-Fashioned* single here does the trick with its combination of cucumber-toned Hendrick's Gin, chin syrup, pineapple and orange. Bizarre and delicious, along with a dose of herbal remedy tributes horseradish.

Instead, we ended the evening by getting back chocolate to sip it back back at our hotel room. Despite my yearnings for *La Perla* and the meal at **Anzane**, **Barcelo** barbecue and a stressful week proved too much for **James**. He was asleep moments after he hit the mattress. But I won't ask for my money back. Dinner was satisfying, even if I didn't get lucky. ☺

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Rachael Young, preparing a bug dinner

Six-Legged Supper

Entomophagy might fill your belly and save the world

BY ETHAN DE SOE

Rachael Young has been getting a lot of attention for her culinary explorations. But the founder of the pro-entomophagy organization Eat Yummy Bugs is more than anything, a conservationist. "It interests everything I do," she says.

Much of what Young does these days is spread the word that not only are insects delicious, but eating them on a large scale could have huge beneficial environmental benefits and open up profitably sustainable avenues of commercial agriculture. The first step, she says, is to get past the cultural stigma attached to eating insects—a task for which she is well prepared.

Young, 31, knows that the revolution of insect eating will never arrive unless bugs can be prepared in tasty, non-icky ways. Which is why she teamed up with chef Mark Grier and the adventurous spirits at Birmingham's Artisan to host a "bug dinner," a showcase of just how tasty bugs can be.

A resident of Montpelier, Young grew up in Vermont and went to Prescott College in Arizona, a school known for its focus on environmentalism. It was there, she says, that "it really became clear to me that the way to save the world was to diversify our global protein." She realized that the use of large land animals as protein sources was hugely resource-intensive, she says. So she turned to the smaller critters.

After seeing the common garden meal, or the species most commonly used to prepare

insects, "This invasive species flourishes out west, yet, as Young learned, most of the adults in the domestic cricket market are actually imported. So she started raising them herself." They're high in protein and have negligible cholesterol," Young says. "They're a health food, and they reproduce exponentially. It's an amazing agricultural model."

Then she learned of David Greer, a Rhode Islander who runs an organization called Small Stock Foods. Greer had taken Young's model of ecological and not one they lost, but as a chance to get entomophagy going. After contacting Greer, Young knew that she'd found the ideal channel for her passion for conservation.

Young is passionate about the ways in which entomophagy can improve personal and global health. "When farmers and livestock compete for landscape and eat the same types of crops," she says, "food prices go way up. We want corn and they want corn." She comes across as not outraged so much as astounded at the stupid decisions that have made factory farming disastrous.

Commercial fishing practices are just as bad, Young thinks. She recalls in particular the most commonly eaten crustaceans "killing each other," she declares. "For every pound of shrimp, 10 pounds of marine life are killed up and down the seaplane." Still, consumers continue to demand shrimp, and consumer demand drives the market.

So life's not without a sense of ironic purpose that Young returns to crickets, one of the

bevo

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Time-Tested Troubadour

For the past 20 years, singer-songwriter and guitarist Tom Rush has performed the art of memorable live performances. A gifted musician and storyteller, he burst onto the folk scene in the 1960s. In the decades since, he has made an impact on notable performers such as James Taylor, who claims that "Tom was not only one of my early heroes, but also one of my main influences." Known



TOM RUSH
Singer-songwriter and guitarist. Rush has performed at the State Museum, 1100 N. 1st St., 7 p.m. Free. bit.ly/13G48

MARCH MUSIC

MAR. 1 | FAIRS & FESTIVALS

Big Easy Bash

New Orleans gets a northern makeover at the 19th annual Big Easy Bash. The event features a variety of live music, including the State Museum, 1100 N. 1st St., 7 p.m. Free. bit.ly/13G48

MAGIC HAT MARCH GRAS PARADE
Saturday, March 1, noon-5 p.m. at various downtown Burlington locations. Free. bit.ly/13G48

When the Golden Dragon Acrobats perform, they tap into time-honored traditions tracing back more than 2,000 years. Widely regarded as China's top touring acrobatic company, the award-winning troupe's dedication to high-quality productions is unmatched. Cirque Zibo is no exception. This winged show pairs the vision of renowned artistic director Danny Chang with his wife Angela Chang's awe-inspiring choreography. Set to ancient and contemporary music, thrilling theatrics include dance, aerial stunts, human pyramids and stunning costumes. This celebration of Chinese culture reflects the Washington Post's assertion that "there is a precision and beauty about everything these performers do."

MAR.5 | THEATER

GOLDEN DRAGON ACROBATS

Wednesday, March 5, 7 p.m. at Flynn Amphitheater in Huntington. \$15 to \$45. flynntheater.org

Balancing Act

MAR.1 | SPORT

Pedal Pushers

Rather than sit or snowshoe along Vermont's vast trail network, adventure seekers at WinterBike! do so on two wheels. Kingdom Trails, Mountain Bike Vermont and U.S. Grand Prix Tour host a day of riding and revelry featuring bicycles specially outfitted with fat tires. Group rides welcome; participants of all abilities, while confident cyclists compete in the six-man downhill snowcross race. New to the sport? Demos and bike rentals introduce the unique outdoor activity to those looking to experience winter anew. If Mother Nature fails to provide ideal conditions, folks can look forward to alternate routes and plenty of hot tubs.

WINTERBIKE!

Saturday, March 1, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., at Kingdom Trails at Woodbury. \$10 to \$20 only. 800-680-8800. winterbikevt.org



SCAN THESE PAGES
WITH THE LAMAR APP
TO WATCH VIDEOS
SEE PAGE 9

COVER PHOTO: FRANK FORD/AGE COLLECTION/AGE COLLECTION

WINTERBIKE!

SEE PAGE 9

WINTERBIKE!

WINTERBIKE!


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calendar

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 25

TELEGRAPH NEWS HOUR See WFSB-TV 10 p.m.

SAT. 01

allstate

SAVING See FRIDAY 12 p.m.

etc.

VERMONT RAILS MODEL TRAIN SHOW

Connections and friends the model train community is proud to display in a popular hobby. Open House for the Vermont Railway Association. Open: April 30, 5-9 p.m. Free for kids under 10. \$3 per day for kids 10-18. \$10 for adults. \$15 for seniors. Info: 578-8335

fairies & festivals

SALES WINTER CARNAVAL Local folk for the 13th day of winter. Free. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Free. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Info: 578-8335

HOUSE FOR SENIORS (HOMES FOR SENIORS) Open house for the 13th day of winter. Free. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Free. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Info: 578-8335

SUNSHINE LAKE FESTIVAL See FRIDAY 10 a.m.

film

ANIMAL SCHEDULING Changeling's home. A documentary about the life of a young boy who is a member of the Changeling community. Info: 578-8335

ALAN HARTY (HARTY) FILM SCREENING

Open house for the 13th day of winter. Free. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Free. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Info: 578-8335

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health & fitness

BENTLEY TOWN WITH JILL LANE See FRIDAY 10 a.m.

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Les Misérables

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— Mattie Thomas

Info: lyrictheatrevt.org



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events

ORGANIZING TO OWN THE PLANET Photo: Michelle of 100 Vermont shares stories related to Vermont's role and potential in the movement. Community Center Media Room, Middlebury College, Plainfield 7-4:30 p.m. Free.

art

THE INFLUENCE OF COLOR THEORY IN 20TH-CENTURY LIFE Reviewed and Curated, Center for the Visual Arts, Vermont College of Fine Arts, Waterbury 7-8:30 p.m. Free. Info: 802-249-1100.

film

ONE GLENN Biographical screen. The story of Glenn Gould, a young pianist who became a legend. Vermont College of Fine Arts, Waterbury 7-8:30 p.m. Free. Info: 802-249-1100.

food & drink

GRAND NIGHT WITH MCCABE High School. A night of food and drink. Vermont College of Fine Arts, Waterbury 7-8:30 p.m. Free. Info: 802-249-1100.

gourmet

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kids

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music

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essentials

ESSENTIALS: DRINKING TOOLS FOR NON-PROFIT Review: A guide to the best tools for non-profit organizations. Vermont College of Fine Arts, Waterbury 7-8:30 p.m. Free. Info: 802-249-1100.

events

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DISCUSSION



Pause, Then Play

After three years of self-imposed silence, Rachel Ries returns

BY GARY LEE MILLER

In 2006, singer-songwriter Rachel Ries (pronounced "rees") had more everything she thought she'd ever want. She had recorded two successful records, cut a new one, *Country E.B.*, with Anais Mitchell, and was bringing more time under the spell of her articulate, jazz-inflected folk. Which does little to explain why she walked away. Now, after three years of silence, Ries, 35, who at least temporarily has found solace in Vermont, has returned to her musical career with a sparkling new record, *Ghost of a Gardener*, and a new outlook on the career she once abandoned.

The child of Mormon missionaries, Ries spent her early years in Zare, then moved with her family to a Minnesota settlement in South Dakota, which she describes as "a very well-educated community of farmers and musicians and theologians and a very odd farming town."

In both places, music surrounded her. Following along in hymnbooks, she learned to read music before she could read English. At age 13, she persuaded her parents for a violin and spent the early years of high school playing violin and piano and building her vocal diversity in choral groups.

The last friction in Ries' musical life came in her mid-teens, when she decided that classical forms didn't satisfy her need for personal expression. She picked up

a guitar and started writing songs. After a half stint at college ("It was apparent they weren't going to teach me what I needed to learn," she says), Ries plunged into instrumental rambles as she tried to figure out her next steps. She knew she wanted to be a professional musician but had no idea how to realize her dream.

During a sabbatical in the Southwest, Ries dropped in on the legendary Kentucky Folk Festival, something she describes as a revelation.

"I realized that there are people like me who are obsessed with... this humble act that matters," Ries says, tipping a cup



RIES: STEVE GRANITZ

of tea on the sofa of her Minneapolis apartment. "You'd better wear doing it on this small, manageable real-life scale."

In 2003, Ries headed to Chicago, where she took the leap into the open-mic scene and began to pursue her dream in earnest.

She toured on her own and with Mitchell, whom she had met at Berkeley.

"We played the windows, most amazing way out-of-the-way places, country stores, house concerts, church basements, for tips and wine and hopefully a guest room or a couch,"

Mitchell recalls in an email.

Ries cut her first record, for *You Only* (Warner Records) in 2005, followed by a self-produced album, *Without a Bird*, in 2009.

Yet so Ries' career blossomed, so did her doubts. Simply put, the life of a rising star was beating its hell out of her.

"It all began to feel smaller, colder and hungrier than I wanted," she says. "I felt like I wasn't being a good person. I was stressed, and my immune system was shot."

But Ries' health wasn't the only reason she walked away from music.

"I also fall in love," she says. "I had been so in love with the music, and I didn't love it anymore. So I decided to love a person instead."

For three years, Ries didn't do a show or even write a song.

"I walked into shops," she says. "I looked after kids. I cried a lot."

And eventually, she came to the conclusion that life without music just wasn't tenable. So she sat down and wrote a song.

The tune that ended the dry spell was "Woods." The second track on her new record, it limply describes the devastating absence of her voice and the celebration of its sudden return.

"I ambly the days when I stood in their wake
limbeck of hours
but joyful and mad
when they made it back
to sight on my lowered tongue"

Recorded in Chicago at *Producers Studio Sound* in the winter of 2012, *Ghost of a Gardener* brings together a number of longtime Ries collaborators (Full disclosure: Anais Mitchell, sister of *Seven Days* music director Ben Bolles, plays bass). It was Ries' first adventure in a big studio — the one founded by the late Jay McInerney of *Wicker* — and the first time she had fully taken charge of implementing her musical vision.

"I had the beauty and the balls to do what I wanted," she says. "Before, I didn't think I could do that... all the shots and trust myself to make the right call."

The music is a record that's lively, compressed and thrillingly changeable. Ries' lush vocal modulations form a counter sound which the instrumentation shifts like the weather, from the raucous hope of the piano intro on the record's opener to a hurricane of empty guitar and synth on "I See It Coming." As Mitchell points out, the record showcases not only Ries' "acquired" voice but another strength that often goes overlooked: her considerable compositional chops.

"People might not realize what a visionary songwriter and producer she is," Mitchell says. "Her songs are such a little journey, you don't know where they're gonna go. There are always the moments, like in *Country*, these changes that are unexpected and feel exactly right."

Lyrical, the record is vulnerable for the interplay of loss and frustration, hope and redemption, death and rebirth. But for Ries, the central theme is determination.

"Yeah, I quit," she confesses. "Maybe I missed up. But there is a lot of willpower to reclaim my life, music is that right?"

Outside the record, Ries finds that her exile from music, although painful, was necessary.

"I think sometimes you have to rip something out of yourself to see if it really needs to be there," she continues. "[Music was] all I ever wanted to do. I didn't know what my identity was without music. That can be pretty fragile ground."

For now, Ries is heading out on a four-month tour, including a stop at *Signal Kitchen* in Burlington on Friday, February 28. And this time, she'll be looking at her career with a new attitude.

"I am a complete and beautiful human without music," she says. "It is now what I choose to do. I feel like it is right for me, like I have something to give." CD

INFO

Ries' first plays a record release show at *Signal Kitchen* in Burlington on Friday, February 28, with Cuddly Music and Henry Smith, 8 p.m. \$10 AA. nahees.com

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WHAT A VISIONARY
PRODUCER AND
ARRANGER SHE IS.

ANNA MITCHELL

SOUNDbites

BY DAN BOLLES



The Usual's Suspect

This Weekend, Burlington braves for the 19th annual Magic Hat Mardi Gras Parade. If you're new to town or otherwise have somehow missed the parade for each of the previous 18 years, here's what you can roughly expect to see on the afternoon of Saturday, March 1, when thousands upon thousands of revelers descend on downtown Burlington. Ready?

"WOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO"

Also,

"YEAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAH"

And,

"ELAAHAHAHAHAHAHSCCH"

Further words — or, y'know, words — Mardi Gras in the Queen City is kind of a shorthand. Not on par with the detached shibboleth that is Mardi Gras in the Crescent City of course. We're far too discernant of nuances — and it's far too cold — for that. And our version of Mardi Gras is relatively fairly broadly based. It's a wordless, nonetheless. And I suspect this year will not disappoint.

(On depending on your tolerance for shorthands, I suspect it will disappoint. It's all relative, right?)

Anyway, as per usual, Mardi Gras weekend gets under way with a kick-off party at the Higher Ground Ballroom on Friday, February 28. And as per usual, the bash features nationally touring bands of the genre variety — this year it's live EDM outfit **CONSPIRATOR** and country/blues/jazz rock/funk/funk-electro-spectacular **NOFAP**. But that

sneaky dancey fare is all a prelude to the main event the following afternoon.

Also as per usual, the festivities on Saturday afternoon get under way with local Afro-Brazilian percussion ensemble **RAMBOLACADA** performing on Church Street. They'll be joined by the venerable-inspired variety troupe **AMBIGUOUS FAMILY CIRCUS**. Just prior to the parade, you can catch funky funksters **SOBERNOUS** — who play funk music — fading up the steps at the top block of the marketplace. However, if you'd rather not brave the elements, there are numerous indoor entertainment options, pre-parade. For example, Nectar's has live music all day long. Delta Church Street watering holes Red Square and R&R.

Then there's a parade. After that, New York City's the **COMMON SENSE** will take to the stage atop the marketplace for some ruckus of the garage-blues variety. And after that, the entire city blocks out on a drunken stupor in preparation for live! clem during Lent.

You may have picked up on the idea that I've a little less excited about Mardi Gras than I should be — after all, this paper is a media space, I confess. It's true. I can't help but feel I've been writing the same column about the parade and surrounding scene events

for, well, as long as I've been writing this column. And looking back through the last seven years, I pretty much have, because Burlington's Mardi Gras has pretty much remained the same, too. And that's a bad.

When the parade started 19 years ago, it was little more than a handful of Magic Hat employees and friends gleefully marching down Church Street in local costumes and driving funny looks from confused onlookers. It was raucous. It was silly. It had an element of counter-cultural. And because of those things, it was brilliant. Because it was brilliant, it took off.

Over the years, the parade has grown exponentially. It is now one of the city's — scratch that, New England's — signature annual events. People come from all over the country to attend. It's become a critically important weekend for Burlington businesses, which receive a vital injection of cash during one of the slowest times of the year. It benefits a wonderful organization, FROPE Works, which works tirelessly to combat sexual violence. It's a much-needed middle finger to the relentless harassment of winter. It's a huge party. Still, it's given a bit predictable.

When an event reaches such a grand

scale, it's hard to

live culture
VERMONT ARTS NEWS • VIEWS

For up to the minute news about the local music scene, follow @danbolles on Twitter or read the Live Culture blog www.danbolles.com/liveculture.

HIGHER GROUND

www.highergroundmusic.com

WHITE DENIM
FEBRUARY

DWEEZIL ZAPPA
ITERATION: LOST IN MENTAL LAND

ZAPPA PLAYS ZAPPA
LIVING PERFORMANCE BY DWEEZIL

IRATION
THE MOVEMENT, NATURAL FLAVORINGS

WINTER BREAK: GLOW PARTY
CASA, 10PM

CONSPIRATOR, DOPAPOD

JESSE DEE

SETH YACOVONE BAND
ALL NIGHTERS

MARCH

THE WOOD BROTHERS
GRASS KASHIER

WHITE DENIM
THE DISTRICTS

BRETT DENNEN
JOY NOVICE

PROJECT PLAYERS
PLAYERS PETER GABRIEL

STEPHEN KELLOGG
CAROLINE TAYLOR

FIRST FRIDAY
FAMULA MANS, DE HALL DE TROUSERS

THE ONE FASHION EVENT

CONSPIRATOR FEBRUARY 28
10PM-12AM
1000 WILLOW ST. (N. SIDE)
1000 WILLOW ST. (N. SIDE)
1000 WILLOW ST. (N. SIDE)

NOFAP FEBRUARY 28
10PM-12AM
1000 WILLOW ST. (N. SIDE)
1000 WILLOW ST. (N. SIDE)
1000 WILLOW ST. (N. SIDE)

REVIEW *this*

John Daly Trio, *John Daly Trio*

(SELF-RELEASED CD DIGITAL DOWNLOAD)

John Daly would seem to be a quiet fellow, the kind of musician who prefers to let his music speak for itself. For example, his progymnastic Irish-dub EP arrived at the Severe Dupa offices recently in a plain package containing none of the promotional fluffery typical of new releases — self-aggrandizing lead lines, hyperbolic press digressions, etc. Well, there wasn't even a quick note introducing either himself or the record. There was only the album, itself presented as simply as possible: six songs, self-titled, with a picture of a kitten on the cover.

Daly's music is likewise straightforward. Generally, he favors a succinct compositional strategy, rarely straying outside the time-honored boundaries of folk, pop and rock architecture — verse, chorus, verse,

maybe a bridge here and there. His arrangements are modest, typically consisting of nothing more than bass, acoustic guitars and occasional first vocal harmonies. Even his song titles are as direct as can be. This of the six consist of a single word. The wordy oddball "Mary Light".

For Daly, simplicity is not a limitation but a virtue. His spare approach provides ample room for his primary strength, his songwriting, to bloom. Daly has a natural gift for crafting hooks. And on his debut, seeing he skillfully layers melody on an on top of one another. *Alone* opens "You" centers on an undulating acoustic progression. But his charms, "I couldn't give it away" gives the listener from a bygone groove. "Lost" employs a similar tack, with Daly's dusky rasp increasing in intensity at each chorus. The following cut, "Father" is an honest admission of uncertainty and fear in the face of impending fatherhood. "I don't



know how to father, don't know how to father you" sings Daly at the gently swelling hook. As with most of his best moments — the moody "Angel" for one — the blunt simplicity of his words and melody make his musings compelling.

While Daly's boundaries, guitars, bass, banjo, and keyboard. Adam Turry, follow his lead and play with restraint as the results can be powerful. However, there are times when excessive guitar noodling nears the road and busy lines clutter otherwise serene scenes. Fortunately, such instances are the exception, making the John Daly Trio's self-titled debut a quiet charmer.

John Daly Trio by the John Daly Trio is available at cdonly.com.

QAM ROLLIES



Banjo Dan & the Mid-nite Plowboys, *Caught in the Act! Very Live Recordings 1975-2010*

(SELF-RELEASED CD)

When Banjo Dan & the Mid-nite Plowboys made it quite in September 2012, they ended a 40-year career that likely ranks to the longest run of any band in Vermont history. Bluegrass or otherwise. During that span, the Plowboys played all across the country, around the globe and at just about every club, Grange, hall, band shell and town square in Vermont. They are regarded as the godfathers of Green Mountain bluegrass. And their 38 recordings — including various solo projects and collaborations — make up a veritable encyclopedia of the genre's history in the state. But for those who don't have the time or sit through that voluminous canon, the band's recently released double album, *Caught in the Act! Very Live Recordings 1975-2010*, provides an efficient crash course. More than that, it's a wildly enjoyable career



retrospective of a beloved musical tradition that captures the players as they were best experienced live.

As its title implies, the 38 "very live" tunes presented over two discs includes selections from concerts spanning the length of the Plowboys' illustrious career. Owing to the discrepancies in recording technologies over the past four decades, they vary in quality, from scratchy analog tapes to crystal clear digital captures. They also have not been glossed up to cover for inevitable clams and fubs. Or, as "Banjo Dan" Lindsay himself puts it in the album's liner notes, "You'll hear the occasional hiccup when some Plowboy reaches for a sho and part waxes."

That fluctuation in sound fidelity, as well as the "occasional hiccup," lends the recording warm vitality. Whether riddling through traditional numbers, staples by the likes of Bill Monroe and Doc Watson, or grooved up versions of pop songs — a Banjo Dan specialty and bankable crowd pleaser — it's hard not

to get caught up in the band's unalloyed energy. The record's liveliness echoes the affinity the Plowboys have long had for each other and for their audiences — and their audiences for them. And there are some sublime performances throughout, pasteurized reminders that not only were the Plowboys among the first to play bluegrass in Vermont, they were also among the very best.

Candidly, you won't find many Plowboy originals in the mix, which is a shame. But Lindsay hints that some historical excavations could be in the offing. Following the band's farewell show, he mined some 40 live recordings to compile material for *Caught in the Act!* It seems impossible that treasure trove wouldn't contain a gem rendition of "I'll Take the Hills," "Bananae!" or any number of other Banjo Dan classics he surges a sequel is in order. Until then, *Caught in the Act!* is a must-have for bluegrass heads, local music history buffs and Banjo Dan fans alike.

Caught in the Act! Very Live Recordings 1975-2010 by Banjo Dan & the Mid-nite Plowboys is available at banjodan.com.

QAM ROLLIES

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\$5, 21+

3/1
Bruce Marshall
\$5, 21+

3/6
In Kahootz
\$5, 21+

3/7
**Kat Wright
and the Indomitable
Soul Band**
\$5, 21+

3/8
Last Kid Picked
\$5, 21+

**Doors open at 7pm,
Music starts at 9pm**



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Past Forward

TR Ericsson, BCA Center

One way to approach Brooklyn artist T.R. Ericsson's multimedia installation at the BCA Center is to consider what it is not. "Crackle & Drag: Film Index" is not the kind of exhibit that induces instant accessibility. Instead of individual works of finished craft, the show is an "archive of personal artifacts" that are "deconstructing" according to an introductory wall panel. (The accompanying catalog shows 109 artifacts, more than the exhibit contains.)

REVIEW

There's something utterly familiar about this archive: Its vintage photographs and antique letter agencies look like the collected memorabilia of any middle-class American family. But "Crackle & Drag" presents no obvious narrative, or even a chronology.

One almost doesn't know where to begin looking. At the huge slab of polished black granite lying on the floor, engraved from top to bottom with the contents of a letter? At the wall-mounted arrangement of "carbon stained" antique objects? Should one watch the two films being projected side by side on the opposite wall first? Or check out the "time left" of old photos, displayed in vitrines in the back room?

"Crackle & Drag" might be approached as a series of connecting clues, beginning with its title. An explanatory panel says the show is "a haunting portrait of the artist's mother" that is named for a phrase in the final line of Sylvia Plath's 1962 poem "Tides": "Her black crackle and drag" means the poet in what some have judged to be her cover name note. (BCA provides copies of the poem on request.)

The wall-mounted collection of blackened found objects — "poker," "nail," "Mayday flame incense plant" and so on — belonged to one Lynn M. Robinson (1908-2000), according to a label. Lynn is presumably the man standing on a Harvard dorm roof in a framed newspaper clipping.

It was the artist's maternal grandfather, one learns from ruffling the letter engraved on the floor slab. The letter, which appears to be to the artist from his mother, is transformed into a funerary object that evokes the wall-mounted "time" carbon stained in both color and associative meaning: grave marker, cremation.



Photo: Peter W. Smith

Ericsson's mother was Susan R. O'Donnell, one finally learns from her death certificate. That it is open twice in the show, in the series of trills that make up the projected movie, and in one of several cassettes the artist made for vinyl dub-plate recordings of his mother's voice. According to the certificate, the Ohio resident committed suicide in 2009 by an "overdose of drugs." She was 57.

BCA's curator DJ Hollerman, who wrote the catalog's introduction and gives group tours of the show, has watched Ericsson's work progress over the past decade. The art-as-archivist has mounted dozens of iterations of the show while sorting through the material in the years since his mother's death, including ones at the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center and the Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland. In Hollerman's opinion, the BCA show is the most successful yet. "For the show [itself], all of this work carries itself," he opines.

Hollerman first encountered the artist, he says, while working as registrar at the art-acquisitions department of Progres-

THE SHOW IS NOT JUST ABOUT THE ARTIST'S MOTHER BUT ABOUT THREE GENERATIONS — GRANDFATHER, MOTHER, SON.

sive Insurance in Cleveland, where both men grew up. At that time, Hollerman helped the company acquire Ericsson's 2008 work "Everyday Is Like Sunday" — a white porcelain sculpture in the shape of an ex pressed with a blue body pattern. The item came in an edition of three, one hangs in "Crackle & Drag."

For Hollerman, "Everyday" represents the exhibit in microcosm. He points out that the show is not just about the artist's mother but about three generations — grandfather, mother, son. The porcelain is a duplicate of Lynn's son, its hole poi-

tern came from Susan's cigarette, and the piece itself is the work of Ericsson, who left his Cleveland family behind when he moved to New York.

That move incited some grief, the artist reveals in a phone conversation, the weight of which is represented in the 750-pound granite letter. The letter, in which his mother recorded Thanksgiving Day family dynamics in the form of a play, served to remind him of his absence. "I was in New York not just for an art career but to escape something," Ericsson admits.

But the letter is also "filibuster, outrageous," he adds. Likewise, though prompted by a mother's suicide, "Crackle & Drag" should be viewed "as an affirmation," Ericsson insists, a celebration of the lives of ordinary Midwesterners. "So much of our culture comes out of New York or L.A.," comments the artist, whose work has been collected at New York's Whitney Museum of American Art and the Cleveland Museum of Art, among other institutions. "I tried to insert the middlebrow, middle-

movies

SCAN THE QR
WITH THE LANYARD
TO WATCH HOME TRAILER

3 Days to Kill ★★★

Like many people who love movies, I've been thinking about Philip Seymour Hoffman as he leads *What Strangers Do* to work. His death puts this side of 30 left us with so many questions about roles that might have been. I thought I had as I watched the latest from Kevin Costner, who's past this side of 40 now. *Maybe Hoffman eventually had made a Taken run off cost*

Ever since Liam Neeson reintegrated his career with the 2005 *Taken* when he, too, was nearly 60, there is that vein here become standard career moves for aging actors: Nicolas Cage — whose career seems perpetually in need of reintegration — made his with 2003's *Stealer*; Mel Gibson made his with 2002's *Edge of Darkness*. Now Cameron has made his. Looking back at Hoffmann's performance in *Almanac*, responsible for it may be envision him twirling and toying with the booze, something I'd love to see.

Songy Costner channel Nixon isn't on the same order but there's something to be said for it. Namely, this *3 Days to Kill* is the windiest movie he's ever made. It chews off the Telenovela, but it presents as an action film directed by Michael Gandy. You might chalk the Euro overtones up to the

involvement of weekly product-critic
Lar Brown. But Brown, remember, was
Tad's product-critic, too.

No, something else is in the score when it comes to the story of Richard Brautigan, a CIA assassin informed he has months to live. He moves to Paris to make up for lost time with his teenage daughter, Kory (Haley Joel Osment) and his ex, Christine (Glenn Close), keeping his condition classified "Secret Key" #26666 again. What it lacks in Altonian sex traffickers, the picture makes up for in better comic moments and heartwarming napping com. I've seen Lifetime movies with more convincing existential dread.

Benson's homecoming is naturally contingent on learning his life behind bars, just as preferably, he's immediately faced with the need to do One Last Job. Another Head plays an agency income finder who promises to take out pimps and gold syndicates filled with the cure to what ails Ethan if he will eliminate the Wolf (Richard Rumberg), a terrorist who is down. When Christine leaves Zoey with Ethan and departs on business, Zoey quips, "It looks like we have three days in jail." Little does she know

What makes the movie a borderline goodwill blast is its raucous wheel of fortune.



LAST THOUGHT IN PARIS Cochran plays a dying CIA operative who agrees to perform her final assignment in exchange for an easier mission when that death was pending.

One minute Edison teaches Zerk how to make a purple bicycle inside the Eiff Tower (the edifice photobombs every other scene). The next, he's yanking duct tape off a horseman's hairy armpits. It tenderizes sequences in which Lillian gives daughter a dancing lesson in preparation for her prom is followed by a brawl in which he turns a hysteric actress loose into a chaotic messroom.

There are, of course, no chases, shoot-outs, explosions and a parent/principal school conference. Oh, and did I mention the scene where Dad prunes the enhanced microgation techniques left wing on the Wolf's Italian accountant to get his favorite mamma's recipe?

The picture is all over the place, with off-the-wall anachronism at constant intervals feels like a parody of the 2008 U.S. Census performance provides no guiding counterweight to the story's gluttony, however. He has enough good, old-fashioned movie-wise conviction to hold a film's disparate elements together and make it a better time than it has any right to be. It's totally weirded. Nonetheless there's a deeper thing you could do with your year: the next time you have a couple of hours to kill.

SEEKING

Gloria ★★★★★

Most of us know Lina Esposito's 1982 hit version of "Gloria" as a perky pop anthem for a woman with serious emotional issues. But the narrative crystallized in 1994 with Umberto Tassin's "Gloria": a love song with lyrics that paid homage to the song's subject.

Torrey is the screen of "Gloria" based in this Chilean drama from composer-director Sebastián Lelio, whose 18-year-old heroine is naturally named Gloria (Piaque Guzmán). Yet the range of reactions the film provokes in viewers is as vast as the distance between the song's two popular incarnations. Some critics have come away asserting that, like *Braveheart*, Lelio puts his main character under a merciless microscope. Others see a sublimation of Gloria's spirit and nobility—a true source of courage.

Perhaps these instincts in Gloria say less about the film than about the viewer, and specifically the viewer's feelings about frank depictions of older people having sex on screen. Lela's camera is close about as elegantly as it's always close to Gloria, knowing where she focuses, ensuring that we see little more of her world than she does. The film is a showcase for Garcia's rich and varied performance. When it comes to finding meaning in Gloria's story, though, Lela leaves that up to us.

We first meet Gloria at a dance club for the older crowd, scooping out guys. She's



DO NOT FEED! MARIJUANA has been found in the water supply for trout in Lake's wastewater system.

single with two grown kids, 28 dx, 1 grandd, a job and a crazy neighbor upstairs. When a hairless cat sneaks into her apartment, she cricks it self righteously, as if suspecting the universe of trying to turn her into a cat lady.

To settle their outcome, Gloria embarks on a romance with outcasted doctor Rodolfo (Sergio Hombrado). Like Gloria, he's eager to be part of his grown children's lives. But while her kids have declared their independence, Rodolfo's demand a degree of

attention and loyalty that compromises the relationship.

It's a small, realistic conflict that allows handsets with admirable straightforwardness (he is, in fact, does Gloria the character) "Sit, in ordinary scene follows ordinary scene, never as you find themselves frustrated with all this down to earthness. There's nothing grand, tragic or special about Gloria's goals. She wants human connection. She enjoys the messy situations of love scenes, but

she's reasonably skilled at the task of real relationships: seduction, negotiation and compromise.

Only the voice of Gladys upstairs, neighbor, standing to me now about his existential crisis, hints at the true stakes of her conflict. He appears to have succumbed to the fate of Erasmus Glöck: a waste landlines full of "voices in your head."

Glória's shifting emotions in the no-glass — who remains invisible until the film's final scenes — mirror ours to her. Everything she dreads for her future, she projects onto the stranger. Yet, when he appears at last, he's no longer as frightening. She, perhaps, is the prospect of growing old without a partner, which Glória confronts each time she questions her relationship with Raul in

The director's own presumed fate of that fate is written into the film's subtext. It's certainly one reason we don't see more movies about single women of Glee's age. (When we do, they're generally buffed, fortunetold rom coms where everybody is safe.) By presenting Tilman without judgment, pointing her as neither a triumphant standard bearer for sex at 50 nor a deluded youth chaser, Lathrop creates a film that speaks up for women much more usefully than the standard heat of *Tilman*. By the end, oddly enough, it's almost as hard to get out of your head.

HARLOT HARRISON

REVIEWS

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DOLBY DIGITAL

3 Days in Fall
The Lego Movie
Phantom
Bike Along
Kobayashi

Friday 28 — Saturday 29
3 Days in Fall
The Lego Movie
The Monuments Men
Tale of Gold

CAPITOL SHOWPLACE

20 Bank St., Newport in 200
DOLBY DIGITAL

on Saturday 30 — Sunday 31
3 Days in Fall
Endless Love
The Lego Movie in 3D
The Lego Movie
The Monuments Men
Kobayashi
Winter in Tale

Friday 28 — Saturday 29
3 Days in Fall
The Lego Movie in 3D
The Lego Movie
The Monuments Men
Venus Flytrap
Tale of Gold

ESSEX CINEMAS & T-REX THEATER

220 Main St., Essex in 200
DOLBY DIGITAL

on Saturday 30 — Sunday 31

3 Days in Fall
About Last Night
August: George County
Endless Love
Foxesong Gang Along
The Lego Movie in 3D
The Lego Movie
The Monuments Men
Phantom

Friday 28
Bike Along
Endless Love
Winter in Tale

Friday 28 — Saturday 29
Fall schedule not available at press time

MAJESTIC 10

800 Express St., Shelton
Show Times to movie, 8:00 pm,
10:00 pm, 12:00 am

on Saturday 30 — Sunday 31
3 Days in Fall
Endless Love
Phantom

3 Days in Fall
The Lego Movie in 3D
The Lego Movie

Love Sunrise
The Monuments Men
Venus Flytrap
The Wild, Wild
Phantom
Foxesong Gang Along
The Lego Movie in 3D
The Lego Movie
The Monuments Men
Phantom
Winter in Tale

Friday 28 — Saturday 29
3 Days in Fall
Endless Love
Phantom
The Lego Movie in 3D
The Lego Movie
The Monuments Men
Venus Flytrap
The Wild, Wild

PARAMOUNT TWIN CINEMA

220 N. Union St., Essex
DOLBY DIGITAL

on Saturday 30 — Sunday 31
The Lego Movie
Phantom
Phantom 3D

Friday 28 — Saturday 29
The Lego Movie in 3D
The Lego Movie
Phantom
Phantom 3D

MARQUIS THEATRE

For St., Montpelier in 200

on Saturday 30 — Sunday 31
The Lego Movie in 3D
The Lego Movie
Love Sunrise
Phantom
Kobayashi

Friday 28 — Saturday 29
The Lego Movie in 3D
The Lego Movie
Love Sunrise
Phantom

MERRILL'S ROXY CINEMA

100 Dr. King St., Burlington
DOLBY DIGITAL

on Saturday 30 — Sunday 31
Bike Along
Phantom
The Lego Movie in 3D
The Lego Movie
Phantom
Winter's Tale

Friday 28 — Saturday 29
Fall schedule not available at press time

PALACE 9 CINEMAS

100 N. Main St., South Burlington
DOLBY DIGITAL

on Saturday 30 — Sunday 31
12:00 pm & 2:00 pm
3 Days in Fall
About Last Night

Love Sunrise
Endless Love
Phantom
The Lego Movie in 3D
The Lego Movie
The Monuments Men
Phantom
Phantom 3D
Kobayashi
Winter in Tale

Friday 28 — Saturday 29
Phantom, not available at press time

PARAMOUNT TWIN CINEMA

220 N. Union St., Essex
DOLBY DIGITAL

on Saturday 30 — Sunday 31
The Lego Movie
Phantom
Phantom 3D

Friday 28 — Saturday 29
The Lego Movie in 3D
The Lego Movie
Phantom
Phantom 3D

THE SAVOIR THEATRE

25 N. St., Montpelier in 200
DOLBY DIGITAL

on Saturday 30 — Sunday 31
Bike Along
Phantom

STONE CINEMA 3 PLEX

Montpelier in 200
DOLBY DIGITAL

on Saturday 30 — Sunday 31
The Lego Movie in 3D
The Lego Movie
The Monuments Men
Kobayashi

Friday 28 — Saturday 29
Phantom, not available at press time

WILDEN THEATRE

100 N. Main St., St. Albans
DOLBY DIGITAL

on Saturday 30 — Sunday 31
3 Days in Fall
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The Lego Movie
Bike Along
Kobayashi

Friday 28 — Saturday 29
Phantom, not available at press time



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Curses, Felled Again

A man accused suspicion by repeatedly eating a pest omelet in Nanticoke, Tenn., taking if a package had arrived. When it did show up, postal workers inspected it and found it riddled with maggots. They alerted police, who arrested Terrell Mills, 34, when he came to clear the package, which contained 10 pounds of pot (Nanticoke's WSMV-TV).

Hard News

The federal government overpaid by \$46.5 million to provide pain pumps to Medicare patients at twice the price private providers charge, according to the Health and Human Services Department's inspector general. The IG report noted that the vacuum erection systems cost taxpayers nearly \$175 million during the years 2006 to 2010 and that reducing the Medicare payment for the devices to the level of non-Medicare payers could save the federal government about \$18 million a year (Washington Times).

Extreme Makeover

Hoping to distance aspiring middle-class Kathabhus from its low-class neighbors, President Narendra Modi suggested eliminating "ster" from its name. The word occurs "place" in Persia, but Modi says he said that it causes foreigners to lump the country with its economically less developed or more politically volatile neighbors. He suggested the name "Kazakh Yeh" or "Land of the Kazakh" and invited public discussion of his proposal (Economist).

Rocket Surgery

Two boys working on a school science project involving model rocketry caused an explosion so powerful that it blew out several windows of their Seattle home, blasted open the back door and propelled debris into the backyard. After the boys were hospitalized, one of the fathers said the boys had tried to start a fire in the fireplace and may have used some of the rocket fuel to get it going (CNN).

**THE VACUUM
ERECTION SYSTEMS
COST TAXPAYERS
NEARLY \$175 MILLION
DURING THE YEARS
2006 TO 2010.**

After students at Reed College in Portland, Ore., pulled a 900-pound snowball, a pair of math majors noticed it and started throwing it toward a city street. They miscalculated its trajectory, however, and it ended up plowing into a dome and ripping apart a roofer's roof. Maintenance workers spent 45 minutes cutting through the 10-inch thick icy globe (Portland's Oregonian).

Write About What You Know

Marie Hest, 44, won a \$10,000 literary prize from Minotaur Books and the Prairie Sky Writers of America for his crime novel *Cold Water Through Bone*. The award includes a publishing contract for the author, a convicted murderer who has been in a South Carolina prison since 1988. Hest and he assembled his view of the outside world for the novel from books he read and from episodes of television's *Law and Order* (New York Times).

Lesson Unlearned

Police who stopped Michael Muller, 21, for snatching a truck in Redding, Calif., said he told them he needed it to make a court appearance for stealing another vehicle. (Redding Record-Sentinel).

Overnight Success

When Google announced it was buying Nest, a high-tech thermostat and smart-home company for \$3.2 billion, investors rushed to buy stock. The flurry crashed the stock of Nestor Inc., which sells automated traffic enforcement systems to local governments and trades under the ticker symbol NEST, to stage 1,000 percent. Prior to the bid, Nestor was trading for less than a penny. After reaching as much as 10 cents, the price fell back to 3 cents (Business Insider).

Goals to Newswatch

Thanks to a new restaurant in Shang Hai, Americans living in the Chinese city of 24 million people can enjoy

previously unavailable ethnic cuisine: Chinese food. That is, Chinese food as served in the United States. Fortune Casino is the brandchild of American entrepreneurs Pang Lian, 31, who grew up in New Jersey and David Ross, whom Lian met in a master's program in hospitality management at Cornell University. The restaurant targets nostalgic Americans by offering General Tso's chicken and other Chinese-American dishes, made with such staples as Skipper peanut butter, Mott's applesauce, Heinz ketchup and Philadelphia cream cheese. "A lot of people called to cry and were bawling on the closing offer six months," Lian says, noting that February marked the restaurant's eighth month. "It's kind of embarrassing that people in China eating American Chinese food, but it was spot-on," customer Megan Ramsey-Moore, who teaches art at Shanghai American School, said, noting the food makes her feel "yolo," "relaxed" and "like I'm at home" (NYC).

Immigration Reform

Thomas J. Donohue, president and CEO of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, declared that the United States needs more low-skill immigrants because U.S. workers aren't "qualified" or "willing" to do such jobs. (Wally Standard).

BLISS BY HARRY BLISS

"Make it snappy, I'm double parked."

TED RALL**U.S. Suspect Possibly Targeted for Drone Attack**

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WOMEN Seeking?

SEEKING SUPERHERO GUYS
 I'm a self-proclaimed nerdy, geeky girl who loves to be the superhero's girlfriend in her fantasies. lovelandm@comcast.net 35

HAMATION DICK

They say that women are all these sexual power plays, right? That they're just the poor saplings for our better intentions? When I go out with them, I can't help but be having some of the same sex that they are. Amber@comcast.net 37

WINTER SURF PLAYSIDE

I would love to find a friend to have a good time with this winter. I'm looking for a guy who is fun, outgoing, and has a good sense of humor. I'm also looking for a guy who is into surfing and has a good sense of humor. lovelandm@comcast.net 35

GLAD TO MEET

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SEEKING CINDERELLA BOY

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LETTERS TO THE EDIT

I am a pretty, successful woman who is looking for a professional, successful man who is fun, outgoing, and has a good sense of humor. I'm also looking for a guy who is into surfing and has a good sense of humor. lovelandm@comcast.net 35

FOR

I am a pretty, successful woman who is looking for a professional, successful man who is fun, outgoing, and has a good sense of humor. I'm also looking for a guy who is into surfing and has a good sense of humor. lovelandm@comcast.net 35

SOMEONE TO PLAY WITH

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NEW ADVERTISER

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NEW Seeking?

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PAID ADVERTISING

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ADVERTISING AVAILABLE

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WE'RE ALL LOOKING FOR THE SAME THING

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OPEN TO NEW EXPERIENCES

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BETTING BACK ON THE ROAD

I am a pretty, successful woman who is looking for a professional, successful man who is fun, outgoing, and has a good sense of humor. I'm also looking for a guy who is into surfing and has a good sense of humor. lovelandm@comcast.net 35

ALWAYS OPEN MINDS

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FIT AND FUTURE

I am a pretty, successful woman who is looking for a professional, successful man who is fun, outgoing, and has a good sense of humor. I'm also looking for a guy who is into surfing and has a good sense of humor. lovelandm@comcast.net 35

LOOKING FOR SOMEONE

I am a pretty, successful woman who is looking for a professional, successful man who is fun, outgoing, and has a good sense of humor. I'm also looking for a guy who is into surfing and has a good sense of humor. lovelandm@comcast.net 35

PASSION ISOTIC PLEASURE

I am a pretty, successful woman who is looking for a professional, successful man who is fun, outgoing, and has a good sense of humor. I'm also looking for a guy who is into surfing and has a good sense of humor. lovelandm@comcast.net 35

ADVICE OF LOVE

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CHIEF Seeking?

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SEXY

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SEMI-NUDE GUY

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COMPUTER SEEKING

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IN LOVE AND LUST

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Your wise counselor in
 love, lust and life

ASK ATHENA

Dear Athena,

My platonic friend and I have discussed becoming intimate. We have known each other 10 years, and I guess it was inevitable things would come to this. We've only met once, and our entire friendship has been through online chats, emails, and phone calls. I would love to sleep with her, except that she has herpes. I've told my friend that I am worried about having sex with her but I would like to be her friend with benefits. How do I handle this?

Sincerely,

Walking on a Tightrope

Dear Walking,

You're only me 6'2". That's a big deal in and of itself. Herpes, said, the start of an intimate relationship between friends can be tricky, especially given the modern-day love in the Time of Chicks and the fact that you two have got going. Wow! 17 years! You say you want to be "friends with benefits" but the concept is often well just that it can be challenging to pull off without someone getting too attached or hurt. You two have cultivated an impressively long friendship, and deciding to take it to another level should not be taken lightly. Sit down and talk honestly about what you both want and expect. Be aware that you could lose a friend while trying to gain a lover. What's more important to you?

If you proceed with this, you'll be getting to know each other physically and the chemistry will be there or it won't. The way the chemistry works for, for example, could end the relationship before it begins. I recommend taking it slowly and trying not to be judgmental. And that includes your reservations regarding the herpes. After so many years of communicating, I would guess that dear is wise open.

But keep in mind that sex with someone who has herpes does not have to be scary. There are many forms of protection: using male or female condoms, dental dams and gloves can reduce the risk of getting infected. If you're vaginal, oral or anal sex. Learn how each product works. If you're never used to sex, you can be as safe as possible, and avoid sexual interaction when she is having an outbreak.

Finally, take the time to understand herpes — About.com, among other sites, offers useful and expert information. Education is power, whereas fear puts a damper on intimacy and pleasure. The more you know the less afraid you'll be, and the less afraid you are, the more fun you can have. Good luck and let me know how it works out!

Yours,
 Athena



Need advice?

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 her at askathena@sevendaysvt.com

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